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Ex-Combatant Political Engagement in Post-Conflict Côte d'Ivoire

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PhD in African Studies

University of Edinburgh

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Declaration

I declare that this thesis has been composed solely by myself and that it has not been submitted, in whole or in part, in any previous application for a degree. Except where stated otherwise by reference or acknowledgment, the work presented is entirely my own.

Tobey Evonne Berriault

Abstract

Why do some ex-combatants mobilise to make financial and material gains and others do not? This thesis examines the political engagement activities of ex-combatants in post-conflict Côte d'Ivoire. The activities examined include opposition party politics, mutiny, protest, forming associations, and writing letters. This research demonstrates that the choice of activity varies across groups, with the primary determinant being their own perceptions of whether they are the political 'victors' or the politically 'defeated' in the post-conflict period. The main argument advanced is that both political loyalties and proximity to political power impact collective and individual choices of engagement strategy, and, at least partially, determine the degrees of success. Whether ex-combatants perceive claims-making opportunities to exist is shaped by their experiences and expectations of clientelistic exchanges with political elites continuing into the post-conflict period.

Drawing from 12 months of fieldwork in Côte d'Ivoire, from July 2016 – July 2017, this research reveals that ex-combatants with political loyalties to the victorious rebellion of the Forces Nouvelles, were highly engaged in claims-making for material and financial gain. Moreover, it reveals that within the groups of Forces Nouvelles affiliated ex-combatants, those with closer proximity to influential political actors experienced greater success in claims-making than those at a distance. Contrary to this, ex-combatants with sentiments of defeat restricted their political engagement to opposition party politics, and in other cases, chose to disengage altogether. Situating the fieldwork in this time period allows for inquiries into the nature of political engagement in a relatively open and transitional space, as the post-conflict Ivoirian government consolidates its exclusive hold on political and economic power. The case of post-conflict Côte d'Ivoire shows that the greatest risk to peace and stability comes from ex-combatants with the closest ties to political power, rather than from those who feel disgruntled and side-lined. It shows that ex-combatants who are closer to political power engage in highly destabilising forms of political engagement, while those farther away, or out of favour, have restricted their actions.

This thesis explores Ivoirian history and politics to understand how ex-combatants perceive political opportunities and constraints in the post-conflict period. In doing so, it contributes to academic discussions about post-conflict compensation for wartime experience, ex-combatant political behaviour, and finally, the transformative effects of violent conflict in reconfiguring social orders in the post-conflict period.

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Abbreviations

AQIM	Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb
BAE	Brigade Anti-Emeute
CECOS	Centre de Commandement des Opérations de Sécurité
Le Collectif	Collectif des Ex-Combattants et Représentants des ADS
ADCI	Association des Démobilisés de Côte d'Ivoire
CIE	Compagnie Ivoirienne d'électricité
ComZone	Commandant de Zone
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilisation, Reintegration
EFA	Ecole des Forces Armées
FN	Forces Nouvelles
FACI	Forces Armées de Côte d'Ivoire
FAFN	Forces Armées des Forces Nouvelles
FDS	Forces de Défense et de Sécurité
FRCI	Forces Républicaines de Côte d'Ivoire
FPI	Front Populaire Ivoirien
IB	Ibrahim Coulibaly (alias "IB")
MPIGO	Mouvement Populaire Ivoirien du Grand-Ouest
MJP	Mouvement pour la Justice et la Paix
PDCI	Partie Démocratique de Côte D'Ivoire
RHDP	Rassemblement des Houphouëtistes pour la Démocratie et la Paix
RDR	Rassemblement des Républicains
SSR	Security Sector Reform
UN	United Nations
UNOCI	United Nations Operation in Côte D'Ivoire
MINUSMA	United Nations Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali
MINURCA	United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic

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Chapter 1: Introduction

We, the ex-combatants, idle and having only received 8,000,000.00 frs, poorly disbursed, are the forgotten ones.

-President, Association of Demobilised of Côte d'Ivoire,
September 14th, 2015

We have taken up arms this morning to claim a number of things the State owes us. [...] The beneficiaries are all ex-combatants who did the rebellion and who have been integrated into the army.

-Interview Mutineer, *Le Mandat* newspaper,
January 7th - 8th, 2017

From mid-2015 onwards, a number of public claims-making activities began to fill the post-conflict landscape in Côte d'Ivoire. These claims were put forth by ex-combatants from the 11-year Ivoirian political crisis, which occurred between December 1999 to April 2011,¹ and effectively split the country in two down a deep political divide. The crisis, tied to questions of citizenship, land, and belonging, pitted those who supported the government under Laurent Gbagbo, against the Forces Nouvelles (FN) northern rebellion, who pledged support to Alassane Ouattara. For more than a decade, the crisis was characterised by sporadic episodes of intercommunal violence between Ivoirians of southern and northern descent.² On the 11th of April 2011, Laurent Gbagbo was captured after seeking to retain power in the wake of a disputed election. This event marked a new period where FN soldiers claimed victory

¹ Many researchers of Côte d'Ivoire refer to the political crisis from 2002-2011. I include the events from 1999 onwards as they mark the beginning of armed revolt, with the same set of founding actors who led to the 2002 rebellion. This is discussed in Chapter 2.

² Ruth Marshall-Fratani, "The War of 'Who Is Who': Autochthony, Nationalism, and Citizenship in the Ivoirian Crisis," *African Studies Review* 49, no. 2 (2006): 15.

and Alassane Ouattara took control of the government. This new period has far reaching implications for post-conflict stability in Côte d'Ivoire, which is exemplified by the claims-making behaviours of multiple groups of self-identifying ex-combatants across the political divide.

At first glance, the quotations above suggest that ex-combatants in post-conflict Côte d'Ivoire have been politically active and uninhibited in staking their claims to the government. If taken as such, they run in accordance with early understandings of disgruntled ex-combatants who, it was widely held, would disturb lasting peace should their grievances go unaddressed.³ This was most recently observed in 2013-14 Mozambique, when former *Resistência Nacional Moçambicano* (RENAMO) fighters remobilised to pursue a low-intensity violent revolt against growing socioeconomic disparities in the country. They also denounced what they saw as a crisis of patronage amongst the RENAMO political party leadership.⁴ Upon closer examination of the above quotations, however, the ex-combatants quoted represent only a segment of the Ivoirian ex-combatant population, specifically, those derived from the victorious rebel insurgency, and whose preferred candidate, Alassane Ouattara, won the Ivoirian presidency in 2011 and was again re-elected in 2015. Gaining a political victory and access to numerous post-conflict benefits such as army integration and short-term financial support, the 'victors' were hardly amongst the most aggrieved of the ex-combatant population. Yet, they remained the most vocal in leveraging their wartime experiences to advance their financial and material interests in the post-conflict period. In contrast, groups of ex-combatants aligned with Laurent Gbagbo and Ibrahim Coulibaly were unwilling to leverage their wartime experiences. Despite stressing that one day it would be "their time" when their political patrons came into power, they still felt as though the political climate was uncondusive for their gain. Consequently, they decided not to act. Collectively, the comments of the aggrieved suggested that political affiliation and loyalty to a handful of influential state officials played an important

³ Lephophotho Mashike, "'You are a time bomb...' Ex-combatants in post-conflict South Africa," *Society in Transition* 35, no. 1 (2004): 87.

⁴ Nikkie Wiegink, "'It will be our time to eat': Former Renamo combatants and big-man dynamics in central Mozambique," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 41, no. 4 (2015): 2.

role in determining who could politically mobilise and disrupt the peace and who could not, without facing any consequences. More importantly, it suggested that proximity to political power equally determined who was more likely to succeed in claims-making in the post-conflict period.

The first quotation above, from the president of the ex-combatant association, *Association des Démobilisés de Côte d'Ivoire* (ADCI), was released in a letter to the prefect of Bouaké, the former headquarters of the northern rebellion. It laid claim to what would put them on a par with those that were integrated into the national army.⁵ Observers present at the scene recorded the complete list of demands: a payment equivalent to what was cumulatively given to those integrated into the rank of Corporal, a meeting with the President of the Republic, a “gesture” to make up for the tardy payments of their 8,000,000 F CFA (approximately €1,200) each, and home medical visits for their peers. According to the President of ADCI, the 8,000,000 F CFA reinsertion payment received through participation in the national Disarmament, Demobilisation, and Reintegration programme (DDR) was insufficient. Should their conditions not be met, they would start an infinite hunger strike at the office of the prefect in Bouaké. In their view, ex-combatants of the ADCI (an organisation dominated by those who supported the northern rebellion) having only received the benefits of a DDR programme, were the forgotten ones. Met largely with deaf ears, the hunger strike did not materialise and none of the demands were met.

The second quotation comes a day after the onset of the first 2017 mutiny, which took place from the 6th until the 8th of January 2017. At this time, soldiers derived from the northern rebellion took arms and blocked entry and exit points to the city. Coordinating their actions across cities and military barracks in Côte d'Ivoire, the mutineers made demands including the payment of bonuses, increase in salaries, reduced time for promotions within the military

⁵ “Le Collectif des Leaders des Ex-Combattants Démobilisés de Côte d'Ivoire,” Public letter from the organisation's President Kaba Sory addressed to the Governor of Gbéké, Prefect of Bouaké, 14th of September 2015.

ranks, and the payment of a supposed ECOMOG bonus payment.⁶ The demands came approximately one year after similar demands were made in November 2015, which were partially met through a non-disclosed deal with the regime.⁷ In 2017, the same segments of the Ivoirian army engaged in mutiny, this time with the addition of alleged 'ECOMOG bonuses' in their list of demands. Of the demands, two were met by the government, including the payment of 12,000,000 F CFA (approximately £ 16,000) and an amelioration in living conditions. In May 2017, the mutiny re-commenced over the slow disbursement of the agreed upon payment. Although the claims highlighted above come from ex-combatants with different post-conflict trajectories, that is, those considered demobilised and those integrated, they share the commonalities in that they were put forth by those who supported the victorious rebel insurgency.

Having observed that claims-making was carried out by only a sub-set of the Ivoirian ex-combatant population, this thesis embarks on a more thorough examination of ex-combatant political engagement and the legacies of post-independence governance in the post-conflict state. To do so, it examines the case of post-conflict Côte d'Ivoire. This analysis makes use of data collected during 12 months of fieldwork throughout 2016 and 2017, as well as historical accounts from the government and the local and international press. This research speaks to the broader theme of ex-combatant politics and places emphasis on the role of history to understand the political opportunities available to ex-combatants in post-conflict Côte d'Ivoire. This thesis sheds light on broader trends in ex-combatant political engagement that go beyond claims tied to technicalities of the DDR programme from the immediate post-conflict recovery phase (2011-2016). This research identifies larger trends in ex-

⁶ "Communiqué du Ministre de la Défense Relatif Aux Événements de Bouake," Ministry of Defence of Côte d'Ivoire, 6th of January 2017.

⁷ "Mutinerie de FRCI: 'Ne gaspillez jamais une bonne crise,' Abidjan.net, November 19, 2014: [HTTP://NEWS.ABIDJAN.NET/H/516156.HTML](http://news.abidjan.net/H/516156.HTML). In response to the soldiers' revolts, government officials reassured them that their grievances would be addressed. Since the public declaration, found in the article cited, little was revealed as what agreement was made. Speculation from both local populations and international observers suggested that the revolting soldiers had received payments. At the time of writing, details remain unknown to the public.

combatant political behaviour, revealing why some ex-combatants leveraged the label of 'ex-combatant' to make claims while others did not.

As observed from 2016 onwards, claims similar to those quoted above, where demands are made for army integration or payments made to match those integrated into the army, were propagated only by ex-combatants from one side of the 11-year political crisis: those considered as the victors. While these examples captured national and international attention, claims-making by those with wartime experience favourable to the post-conflict regime took many forms including personal letter-writing, association-forming, public protesting, and mutiny. For the ex-combatants who were politically aligned to the victorious insurgency, claims-making was both frequent and effective. Moreover, amongst the victors, those who were in closer proximity to influential political officials and institutions, experienced more success than those at a distance, the demobilised. In other cases, ex-combatants with sentiments of defeat were observed to have restricted their political engagement to opposition political party politics, and in more extreme cases, chose to disengage altogether.

The variation of political engagement activities across groups of Ivorian ex-combatants, this analysis argues, is explained through an examination of the country's historical practices of governance, notions of 'victor's justice', and finally, for those opportunistic individuals, the enduring secrecy surrounding key events of the crisis. Simply put, this thesis demonstrates that the expectation of clientelism is a pre-condition for claims-making amongst ex-combatants in Côte d'Ivoire. Through an analysis of ex-combatants across political divides, this thesis accounts for the variance observed in ex-combatant political behaviour, on both individual and collective levels. It also determines what factors most significantly influence their choices of political engagement activity. The findings of this research add more nuance to discussions on the legacies of insurgent victories, post-conflict political opportunities, and continuities in political behaviour, by demonstrating how ex-combatant political engagement choices are largely influenced by their expectations of continuities in governance from the pre- to post-conflict periods. As the claims for material and financial compensation are only put forth by one politically-affiliated group of

ex-combatants, this thesis recognises the inherent political underpinnings of such engagement, and, therefore, moves its analysis beyond that of simple financial claims-making.

Research Questions

The analysis presented in this thesis is based on the following primary research question:

1. *Why do some ex-combatants mobilise to make financial and material gains and others do not?*

Two complementary questions were also explored, the first being the logical point of departure to explore the range of activities undertaken. As this thesis argues that the legacies of post-independence governance shaped post-conflict political behaviours by creating an expectation for continued clientelism, it then became interesting to see whether this expectation extended beyond communities of ex-combatants. The following two questions are complementary to the primary research question above and were used to structure the topic.

2. *How do ex-combatants advance their political and material interests in post-conflict Côte d'Ivoire?*
3. *Do labels of 'ex-combatant' influence political engagement beyond communities of ex-combatants?*

To answer these questions, I draw on data collected from three groups of ex-combatants in post-conflict Côte d'Ivoire: those who were in support of Laurent Gbagbo's previous regime (herein referred to as "Gbagbo supporters"); those who were in support of the northern rebellion, the Forces Nouvelles (FN) and current regime (herein referred to as "FN supporters"); and finally, those who fought alongside the northern rebellion in support of the current regime,

but broke off mid-way as a result of a leadership dispute within the FN (herein referred to as “Commando Invisibles”). This third group, although sharing political affinities with the FN supporters, launched a separate, victorious, urban insurgency in Abidjan during the 2010-11 post-electoral crisis. Despite their common origins in the FN rebellion and their shared political affinities, the Commando Invisibles are taken locally as a separate group from the broader FN supporters. The findings presented in Chapter 8 demonstrate how the political trajectories of the Commando Invisibles⁸ have stood in stark contrast to their FN counterparts, due to their continued loyalty to their fallen leader. Clientelism, it will be demonstrated, set the stage for highly personalistic identification between fighters and their former armed groups leaders.

Notes on Terminology

As previously elaborated, the term ‘ex-combatant’ is contentious and does not have a standardised definition. It is, therefore, important to highlight that the term is used in the inclusive sense outlined above throughout this thesis. It includes individuals who self-identify as ‘ex-combatants’ regardless of whether they gained the official status through a peacebuilding program. Using the inclusive sense of the term allows for a greater scope for this study, taking into consideration any individual in the post-conflict state and their relation with the label of ‘ex-combatant’. Moreover, the research suggests that there is no correlation between the DDR-given title of ‘ex-combatant’ and the self-proclaimed title. Individuals self-identify on their own terms, according to their own motivations. Amongst ex-combatants, self-identifying individuals may not necessarily be recognised by other ex-combatants in their cohort. This thesis, therefore, takes into consideration all ex-combatants. As similarly observed in

⁸ The spelling of Commando Invisibles varies across French media sources. This thesis will use the “Commando Invisibles” spelling most frequently used in articles appearing in *Jeune Afrique* and *Le Monde*, both prominent French media publications.

post-conflict Zimbabwe, a ‘true’ and ‘fake’ veterans discourse developed and was linked to a politics of legitimation and de-legitimation.⁹

Moreover, this thesis uses the term “regime” to refer to the post-conflict government of Alassane Ouattara and his coalition party, the *Rassemblement des Houphouëtistes pour la Démocratie et la Paix* (RHDP). The RHDP is a coalition party that came together to topple Gbagbo’s *Front Populaire Ivoirien* (FPI) and consists of Ouattara’s *Rassemblement des Républicains* (RDR) in alliance with Henry Konan Bédié’s *Partie Démocratique de Côte D’Ivoire* (PDCI). Much of the FN rebellion’s support base drew from the same populations as Alassane Ouattara and his political party did. As a northern-born Ivoirian of mixed heritage, Ouattara’s candidacy came to represent the greater northern cause, to which the FN had strong and clear political affinities. In 2010, Ouattara claimed victory over Laurent Gbagbo in the presidential elections. In support of Ouattara during the period of contestation, the FN rebellion descended into Abidjan to help Ouattara consolidate his political victory. Again in 2015, Ouattara was re-elected as president of the Ivoirian republic, and is expected to hold office until the next presidential elections in 2020. While Ouattara never held leadership in the FN rebellion, the close political ties between the FN elite and the RDR political party make the connection obvious. The victory of Ouattara in 2010, as the official head of the RHDP coalition between his RDR party and Bédié’s PDCI party falls in line with the FN rebellion’s political wishes, and for simplicity’s sake, is broadly referred to as an insurgent victory in this thesis. As it formed the government in 2010 and again in 2015, the term ‘regime’ places particular emphasis on the RDR component, a northern-derived candidate supporting the broader northern causes.

Scope Conditions and Limitations

This thesis argues that political loyalties and proximity to influential political actors significantly influences the political behaviours of ex-combatants

⁹ Kriger, “Zimbabwe,” 323.

in the post-conflict period. In doing so, it links past practices of clientelistic governance with post-conflict expectations of who has political opportunities and who does not. This thesis, therefore, argues that this theory is more likely to apply in clientelistic states. In post-conflict contexts such as Côte d'Ivoire's, the expectation of clientelistic exchanges between ex-combatants and those wielding political power, clientelism becomes a pre-condition for claims-making and for more disruptive forms of political engagement.

Beyond the scope conditions of this research, there are a couple of limitations. First, this thesis restricts itself to the examination of political engagement initiatives utilised by self-identified ex-combatants in the post-conflict period, with a specific examination of the period in which international presence draws down. The primary reason for this is that the period follows a time in which a highly technical and programmatic use of the term 'ex-combatant' was widely circulated and was attached to publicised benefit schemes available in the national DDR programme. Situating the fieldwork in this time period allows for inquiries into the nature of political engagement in a relatively open and transitional space, as post-conflict governments consolidate their exclusive hold on political and economic power. This time period also allows for an analysis of how technocratic uses of the term 'ex-combatant' can turn into a political category and constituent identity, as post-conflict recovery benefits are no longer available. Moreover, the timing of this research marks a starting point to assess whether this political engagement was a temporary occurrence, or whether, over time, it becomes recurring. Such projections are beyond the scope of this research but can be the basis of additional research.

Of equal importance is that this research does not draw from the claims made by ex-combatants participating in the Disarmament, Demobilisation, Reintegration (DDR) programme of 2012-2015, as they pertained exclusively to the technical particularities of the programme itself, such as the rate at which financial allotments were dispensed, the mode of dispensation, and increases in sums. The nature of claims examined in this thesis are for general financial compensation or integration into the army and are carried out by ex-combatants with political loyalties to the post-conflict regime. The claims reviewed are,

therefore, political in nature, while those from the DDR programme were programmatic in nature. While my analysis recognises that the DDR programme may have socialised or habituated ex-combatants to make financial and material claims, the data collected make a stronger connection with the political alliances they target, as will be demonstrated in Chapters 4 and 5. The episodes of political engagement observed between 2016-2017 placed emphasis on the roles played by ex-combatants to obtain a political victory for Ouattara, and most commonly used military integration as their benchmarks for what was due.

Third, it considers those armed groups who formed leading into, or in response to, the 1999-2011 political conflict. The goal of this research is to see how labels of ex-combatant were used in the post-conflict period, with specific reference to the 11-year political crisis. It does not take into account pre-existing groups of Dozo, Ivoirian traditional hunters, who were used to bolster the FN's security in the north. As the Dozo are a traditional group that pre-dates and persists beyond the crisis, their identities are different in nature to those who participated in the crisis for ideological and practical reasons. Moreover, the details of life under rebel rule provided in Chapter 6 demonstrate that rather than the Dozo mutating to suit the conflict, it was rather the FN that adapted to better suit the traditional preferences of both the Dozo and the communities that held the Dozo in high esteem.¹⁰

Chapter Layout

The remainder of the thesis is outlined as follows: Chapter 2 sets the theoretical framework for the analysis. It explores themes of veteran compensation, ex-combatant politics, social reconfigurations, and clientelism. Chapter 3 provides a brief overview of the methodology used for this research. Chapter 4 explains the post-independence underpinning clientelism in Côte

¹⁰ Till Förster, "Dialogue Direct," *Rebel Governance in Civil War* edited by Ana Arjona, Nelson Kasfir, and Zachariah Mampilly (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015): 213.

d'Ivoire, setting a basis for understanding the expectations around the post-conflict redistribution of goods. The chapter also provides a brief analysis of the 11-year Ivorian political crisis, highlighting the unconfirmed events that have subsequently created opportunities for individuals in the post-conflict period to exploit. Chapter 5 examines the political engagement activities of Gbagbo supporting ex-combatants and their perspectives on political opportunities in the post-conflict state. Chapter 6 examines the mutinies of January and April 2017 as claims-making strategies for those amongst the FN supporters who were integrated into the military and who are in the closest proximity to state resources, while Chapter 7 examines the strategies of those FN supporters who were demobilised and who are distant from political elites. Chapter 8 focuses on the choice of active disengagement by the Commando Invisibles ex-combatants, while additionally revealing how individuals equally from the broader FN supporter groups appropriated the wartime identities of the Commando Invisibles as a way of advancing their interests. Finally, Chapter 9 provides a concluding analysis, placing the empirical evidence in the larger regional contexts and opening discussion of how clientelistic exchanges can be both a constraining and a mobilising factor for ex-combatant political engagement.

Chapter 2: Conceptualising Ex-combatant Political Mobilisation and Clientelism

This chapter explores broad discussions on ex-combatant politics in the post-conflict period. The arguments put forth in this thesis build on three interrelated academic discussions: post-conflict compensation for wartime experience, ex-combatant political behaviour, and finally, the transformative effects of violent conflict in reconfiguring social orders in the post-conflict period. Through its empirical data, this thesis links notions of clientelism with ex-combatant political behaviour. This chapter also introduces the concept of clientelism as it will be applied in the empirical chapters that follow.

Compensation for Wartime Experience

As presented in the Introduction, the aforementioned examples of ex-combatants attempting to achieve wartime compensation are not an unprecedented phenomenon. For at least the past century, the political mobilisation of former fighters to stake claims for political and economic benefits to their governments has been a common occurrence. There are many salient examples from Anglo-American contexts, in which war veterans from World War I and II mobilised in order to obtain state benefits for their roles in active duty.

In Canada for instance, following World War I, veterans formed a variety of organisations, the largest being the Great War Veterans Association. This association sought to represent veteran interests in the areas of pension acquisition, employment for the able-bodied, housing, medical care, as well as provisions for any dependents of war veterans.¹¹ Following the Great Depression of the 1930s, Canadian veterans lobbied for extensive rehabilitation

¹¹ Peter Neary, "Without the Stigma of Pauperism": Canadian Veterans in the 1930s," *British Journal of Canadian Studies* 22, no.1 (2009): 31.

programmes, including a monthly clothing allowance and a war service gratuity. Able-bodied veterans within the group benefited from preferential appointment to the civil service, an insurance scheme, and a land settlement programme that offered favourable financial terms.¹² Similar to Canada, US American veterans of World War I benefited from a national scheme that provided them with bonuses equated by the number of days served. The bonuses, however, were not available for 20 years, prompting the veterans to march in protest in 1932 for a more expedient disbursement. Following World War II, millions of US American veterans returned from war, prompting the government to create the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944, commonly known as the G.I. Bill, with provisions for education and training, loan guarantees for homes, farms, or businesses, as well as for unemployment pay.¹³ Notably updated twice since its inception, the G.I. Bill was amended again in 2008 to provide veterans that were both active and enlisted from the 11th of September 2001 with enhanced educational benefits including more expenses, living allowances, book allowances, and the ability to transfer residual benefits to their spouses and children.¹⁴ Beyond increasing the number of war veterans into the post-secondary educational system, these policies had broader social implications, supporting new socioeconomic classes of Americans to access the institutions that were traditionally reserved for the wealthy and affluent. In both cases, the political mobilisation of war veterans following their active service resulted in greater political and economic benefits for veterans willing to leverage their wartime experiences. These cases shed partial light on the long and global history of political claims-making by fighters returning from battle.

The two cases outlined above are both different and similar to recent cases from Sub-Saharan Africa. In the cases of Canada and the United States, war was fought along interstate dimensions, with a trained national army engaging in decisive battles against a clear opponent. Moreover, they both elicited images of sacrifice and heroic actions for a greater collective cause. As

¹² Neary, "Without the Stigma of Pauperism," 32-33.

¹³ "Education and Training," U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, accessed 17 August 2017, <https://benefits.va.gov/gibill/>.

¹⁴ U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, "Education and Training."

such, veterans returning to Canada and the US were considered to be special members of society, ones who warranted the support of the state and of the larger society to be assisted and compensated for their wartime efforts. The wars of post-independence Africa, however, took an intrastate dimension, through various independence struggles and internal civil wars. While liberation struggles such as Zimbabwe's or Namibia's had clear opponents, opponents in civil wars such as Sierra Leone and Liberia were more difficult to identify. Different from the cases in North America, where wartime experiences could be framed around themes of sacrifice and the collective cause, many African civil wars were concluded with no clear winner or loser, with citizens fighting on opposing or fractioned groups. In such contexts, peace agreements became increasingly brokered with the assistance of the international community and were accompanied by a series of post-conflict recovery efforts.¹⁵ Despite these differences, however, claims-making in post-independence Africa remained remarkably similar to the North American cases, in which veteran concessions often increased following episodes of contentious political engagement with the national government.

Recent examples of political engagement from Sub-Saharan Africa demonstrate similar patterns of political mobilisation of former fighters for the advancement of their group's interests. Following the wave of liberation struggles and colonial independence, veteran claims for war-related compensation were similar to the North American cases above. Norma Kriger's study of post-conflict Zimbabwe, for instance, demonstrates how ex-combatants who were politically aligned to the post-conflict ruling party, ZANU-PF, used a discourse of the liberation struggle as both a symbolic resource and as a strategy to advance their interests. The relationship between the ruling party and the aligned veterans was reciprocal. On the one hand, the ruling party sought power and legitimacy by incorporating ZANU-PF-aligned veterans into business cooperatives as a way of symbolising economic transformation. This

¹⁵ Robert Muggah, "Next-Generation Disarmament, Demobilisation, and Reintegration," *World Politics Review*, June 17, 2014, <https://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/articles/13862/next-generation-disarmament-demobilisation-and-reintegration>.

incorporation gave former fighters, particularly those from the politically favoured ZANLA group, privileged access to employment and training in the private sector- two areas previously dominated by their former enemies, the white ruling elite. The privilege granted to the ZANLA fighters was justified in terms of their wartime contributions to the liberation struggle. In areas where ZANU-PF held tight control, veterans from opposing sides experienced difficulties in forming cooperatives and accessing the same degrees of privilege.¹⁶ On the other hand, ex-combatants who stood in alignment with the political agendas of the ZANU-PF similarly appropriated the ruling regime's liberation discourse, declaring wartime sacrifices as a way of justifying their demands for rewards and additional state benefits.¹⁷ The use of the liberation discourse was key in legitimating veteran access to state resources in the post-conflict period and also effectively linked veterans with national level politics. The close relationship between ZANU-PF and ZANLA veterans resulted in a situation where veterans who maintained loyalty to the regime could mediate national politics through their suppression of opposition movements. By buttressing the regime, they effectively gained and maintained a privileged access to state resources, promotions, and other benefits, all the while quelling any movements that threatened this exchange.¹⁸ The concept of "military patrimonialism", in which the regime is backed by the military, who actively opposes political reforms proposed by opposition, has been used to describe ZANU-PF's relationship with the war veterans within the national army. In such a relationship, both parties have interest in maintaining the political status quo as they both benefit from the exchange of resources for support.¹⁹ Beyond combat-experienced veterans, Kriger additionally detailed how the discourse of

¹⁶ Norma J. Kriger, *Guerrilla Veterans in Post-War Zimbabwe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 141.

¹⁷ Kriger, *Guerrilla Veterans in Post-War Zimbabwe*, 1, 10.

¹⁸ Godfrey Maringira, "Politics, Privileges, and Loyalty in the Zimbabwean National Army," *African Studies Review* 60, no. 2 (2017): 93; Norma J. Kriger, "War Veterans: Continuities between the past and the present," *African Studies Quarterly* 7, no. 2-3, (2003): 3,4,7; Similar patterns have been observed in post-conflict Namibia, where war veterans loyal to the ruling SWAPO regime exerted similar pressures to continue their privileged access to state resources. For more on Namibia, see Lalli Metsola, "Reintegration as Recognition: Ex-combatant and Veteran Politics in Namibia," PhD Dissertation., University of Helsinki, Helsinki Finland, 2015. Available at: <https://helda.helsinki.fi/handle/10138/154055>

¹⁹ Maringira, "Politics, Privileges, and Loyalty in the Zimbabwean National Army," 94.

liberation and sacrifice was later appropriated by groups of ex-detainees to access the privileged benefits originally reserved for those who engaged in armed combat.²⁰ The result of these claims was the eventual extension of eligibility criteria for state-provided economic and political benefits beyond groups who engaged in battle to those who, more broadly, reinforced political agendas of the ruling party. Extending the discourse to groups beyond combatants themselves equally allowed for the inclusion of politically-aligned individuals who may have been excluded on the basis of age or other restricting factors.

Kruger's analysis of the political legacies of liberation struggles is highly intriguing. Although it is based on examinations of a liberation struggle, it applies to other types of conflict as well. The case of Côte d'Ivoire demonstrates this. In Côte d'Ivoire, political loyalties and an expectation of clientelist exchanges are important pre-conditions for claims-making. As in Zimbabwe, former fighter who have 'their own' in power have come to expect significant concessions for their wartime sacrifices to bring their candidate to power. The expectation of favourable concessions for political loyalties falls in line with past practices of clientelistic governance- a topic that is closely examined in Chapter 4. Together, the cases of Zimbabwe and Côte d'Ivoire demonstrate that the legacies of post-independence governance significantly influence ex-combatant political behaviours in the post-conflict period. Equally similar to Zimbabwe was the extension of claims-making practices by groups with loose and questionable affiliations to the Ivorian victors. For these individuals, examined in Chapter 7 and 8, the experience of living through the conflict, coupled with their political loyalty to the regime, was legitimate grounds to stake claims. The chapters that follow demonstrate that the political engagement observed in Kruger's studies of Zimbabwe extend beyond liberation struggles and into different cases of intrastate conflict, as demonstrated by the case of Côte d'Ivoire.

²⁰ Norma J. Kriger, "From Patriotic Memories to 'Patriotic History' in Zimbabwe, 1990-2005," *Third World Quarterly* 27, no. 6 (2006): 1153, 1160.

The wartime experiences of North America and Zimbabwe vary across time, space, and type of war fought. Nevertheless, commonalities exist. The staking of claims for wartime experience in post-conflict Zimbabwe draws parallels with the ways in which North American veterans of the World Wars successfully increased their concessions by leveraging their wartime experiences to secure their livelihoods in the post-conflict state. In the cases highlighted above, former fighters were able to uniquely balance conflicting actions. Although they often trumpeted loyalty to the post-conflict authorities, sometimes invoking sentiments of patriotism and sacrifice, they equally used their wartime credentials to push against the state and to legitimate their claims. While veterans in North America mobilised and put pressure from outside of the state, Zimbabwe's veterans effectively leveraged the same pressure from within, in what appeared to be an extended wing of the ruling political party. The examples above describe successful instances of public gatherings, protests, and patriotic discourse, all of which ceded relatively successful outcomes, and more often than not, increased the benefits and official recognition of their wartime experiences. While the case of Côte d'Ivoire is not categorised as a liberation struggle, Ivoirian ex-combatants with political loyalties to the regime highlighted their distinct contributions to the political conflict, demanding official recognition for their services. Moreover, like Zimbabwe, Ivoirian claims-makers were exclusively from one political affiliation, thus bringing in an important political dimension to the claims-making activities. Trends in claims-making such as those visible in North America and Zimbabwe, where a discourse of sacrifice is leveraged, were equally observed from groups of Ivoirian ex-combatants who consider themselves to be politically aligned to the post-conflict regime. While the examples above refer to inter-state wars and liberation struggles, this thesis demonstrates that it is applicable to other types of armed conflict as well, such as the political conflict of Côte d'Ivoire.

Despite the considerable attention paid to the political engagement initiatives of former fighters from regular state militaries and early liberation struggles, relatively little has been said about the claims-making activities of ex-combatants emerging from civil wars in sub-Saharan Africa. To begin to break down the nuances of the post-conflict experiences of ex-combatants from Côte d'Ivoire, it is important to highlight that the language used to describe these former fighters and their experiences has often been simplified and thus has placed significant limitations on analysis.

The term 'ex-combatant' is fluid and multi-faceted, as it appears across legal, programmatic, and local contexts. Legally, the definition of ex-combatant remains vague. To date, legal scholars and practitioners have drawn on the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and its Additional Protocols (I & II) of 1977 for guidance in how to identify a 'combatant'. The Prisoner of War (POW) definition found in Article 4 of Geneva Convention III says that only combatants can be legitimately held as POWs. Additionally, Article 43 of the Additional Protocol I provides a definition of armed forces that also outlines who is a combatant.²¹ Aligning its definition with that of the Geneva Conventions, the United Nations, in its *Integrated Disarmament, Demobilisation, Reintegration Handbook* (IDDRS), defines combatant as follows.

a member of a national army or an irregular military organisation; or is actively participating in military activities and hostilities; or is involved in recruiting or training military personnel; or holds a command or decision-making position within a national army or an armed organisation; or arrived in a host country carrying arms or in military uniform or as part of a military structure; or having arrived in a host country as an ordinary civilian, thereafter assumes, or shows determination to assume, any of the above attributes.²²

²¹ Anicee Van Engeland, *Civilian or Combatant?: A Challenge for the 21st Century, Terrorism and Global Justice Series* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 29.

²² United Nations, "Integrated Disarmament, Demobilisation, Reintegration Handbook," 1.20. Note - the IDDRS of 2006 has formed the core foundations of subsequent editions. While the IDDRS has been amended several times, the 2006 version is still the primary source consulted.

This definition is most commonly applied to recent African civil wars, in which peace settlements were negotiated and internationally-funded programmes emerged. However, for programmatic purposes, the IDDRS takes a wider definition of combatant, with much hinging on the term 'member'. The following statement, issued in the UN *IDDRS Handbook* (2006), demonstrates the inclusive nature of DDR criteria, taking individuals serving in support roles as members of armed groups eligible for inclusion.

All those who are found to be members of an armed force or group, whether they were involved in active combat or in support roles (such as cooks, porters, messengers, administrators, sex slaves and 'war wives'), shall be considered part of the armed force or group and therefore shall be included in the DDR programme.²³

Beyond the strict definition of POW, this definition outlines broader criteria for inclusion and underscores the importance of how membership is adjudicated in local contexts. Members, regardless of their function, are categorised as 'combatants' and subsequently, as 'ex-combatants', once undergoing the disarmament and demobilisation process. In this sense, within the framework of modern peace-building interventions, the term has been used by both local and international practitioners as a technical signifier, as a short-hand identity marker, and eligibility criterion for access to post-conflict recovery benefits.²⁴

Although the definition used by IDDRS allows for inclusive membership, once an individual obtains the title of 'combatant' and 'ex-combatant', the nuance of the conflict itself, as well as the individual's type of participation becomes reduced and devoid of political inclination. There are pros and cons to this. On the one hand, the departure of the term ex-combatant from images of sacrifice and political inclinations can be a positive development for civil wars in which highly contested political identities were forged. Moreover, the neutral

²³ United Nations, "Integrated Disarmament, Demobilisation, Reintegration Handbook," 2:30:2.

²⁴ Jareme J. McMullin, "Integration or Separation? The Stigmatisation of ex-combatants after war," *Review of International Studies* 39, no. 2 (2013): 389.

term ex-combatant demonstrates the impartiality of the programme itself and does not privilege any political allegiance or type of experience over others.²⁵ On the other hand, however, the term ex-combatant, as used in these types of programmes, reduces the political nature of both the combatant and their post-conflict trajectories. While this thesis recognises the indispensable necessity of neutral DDR programmes, it shows that the title of 'ex-combatant' itself holds significant political weight in the post-conflict period as individuals with or without official ex-combatant status have leveraged it for political mobilisation and claims-making. Depending on how claims are advanced, the neutral signifier takes on a political function, revealing much about larger trends of governance in the post-conflict state.

The data presented in Chapters 3,4,5, and 6 of this thesis demonstrate how different groups have used their ex-combatant labels and wartime experiences in different ways. All groups, however, have come to see the label more as a membership granting access to resources and benefits. Drawing from multiple interviews with Ivoirian ex-combatants from all sides of the political crisis, the label ex-combatant signifies different things for different individuals. The label was most commonly evoked amongst groups of ex-combatants aligned to the *Forces Nouvelles* (FN) insurgency, with little mention or self-identification amongst those who supported rival armed groups. Amongst the FN ex-combatants, it was sometimes used as a slur to discredit another and to identify who was 'real' and who was 'fake'. In other cases, it was used by demobilised FN combatants to portray themselves as victims of official neglect from the victorious rebel insurgency that they helped put into power. For the Demobilised FN who did not benefit from any post-conflict recovery package, it was a mark of pride, signifying their sacrifice and contributions to a noble political cause. Above all, and as presented amongst the broader ex-

²⁵ This question was also brought up with an international practitioner serving in the Security Sector Reform programmes of the United Nations. When questioned why there was a departure from the notion of 'veteran' to 'ex-combatant' in UN programmes, the respondent reflected carefully, eventually responding along the same lines as Metsola. The neutrality of both the programme and the organisations, both domestic and international, were important to assure the broadest participation possible and to signal that the post-conflict period would not belong to one group over the others.

combatant populations from the FN rebellion it was a label that could be leveraged to obtain goods. Similar to observations made in post-conflict Zimbabwe, the label of 'ex-combatant' has many meanings and uses for those willing to leverage it.²⁶ Consistent with McMullin's observation,

Ex-combatants themselves adopt and eschew the label simultaneously to blend in, lobby, protest, apply for benefits, gain acceptance, and make sense of past and present life experiences.²⁷

While there is analytical recognition that wartime experiences are highly variable within ex-combatants as a group, there is still a lack of nuance in how we understand the lasting legacies of political behaviour in the post-conflict period. As elaborated by Lalli Metsola, both labels of 'ex-combatant' and 'veteran' are important objects of analysis that shed important light on statehood, political recognition, and citizenship post-conflict societies."²⁸

Beyond definitions of ex-combatant, the programmes in which they formally participated have attracted significant academic attention. For recent cases emerging from civil wars with internationally-brokered peace deals, such as Sierra Leone and Liberia, the primary lens to examine ex-combatant trajectories has been through an assessment of the United Nations (UN) sponsored, nationally-directed Security Sector Reform (SSR) programme, and Disarmament, Demobilisation, Reintegration (DDR) programmes. Through both programmes, combatants either get integrated into the new post-conflict state forces (SSR) or are demobilised and given financial assistance to reintegrate back into civilian life (DDR). While the SSR integration involves combatants' absorption into the official state security apparatus, the DDR process seeks to place combatants back into regular civilian life. As outlined in the UN's official DDR framework, the *Integrated Disarmament, Demobilisation,*

²⁶ Norma J. Kriger, "Zimbabwe: Political Constructions of War Veterans", *Review of African Political Economy* 30, no. 96 *War and the Forgotten Continent* (2013): 323.

²⁷ McMullin, "Integration or Separation?," 389.

²⁸ Metsola, "Reintegration as Recognition,"33.

Reintegration Standards Operational Guide, typical DDR programme involves between three to four phases, starting with the handing over of weapons (disarmament), the removal of the individual from the armed group structure (demobilisation), and short-term financial and technical support to facilitate their reinsertion back into society (reinsertion).²⁹ The reinsertion phase, is short-term and provides financial incentives to enable a transition, while a reintegration phase is a longer-term process involving acceptance from a host community and the ex-combatant's ability to sustain their livelihoods in legal and culturally-accepted ways. For West African conflicts from the 1990s onwards, the SSR and DDR processes have been the primary vehicles for states to ensure recovery options for combatants from all sides of the conflict. These processes have been used in Sierra Leone (2001-2004), Liberia (2004-2009),³⁰ and most recently, will be applied in Mali following agreements between the warring parties and the government over the technical modalities of the programmes.

As conflict contexts have evolved, so too have the DDR programmes, adapting each generation of programme to meet the new challenges that arise. Although each generation of programmes shares similar strategic objectives to support peace processes and promote security through the removal of weapons and breaking of armed group structures, "traditional DDR" programmes have focused primarily on combatants in military structures. "Second generation" DDR programmes, by contrast, sought to address the problems of violence against unarmed civilians, often perpetrated by local militias or gangs. These second generation programmes have been seen as a way of expanding into broader security and stabilisation efforts in the initial phases of post-conflict recovery, and helping to establish a more secure context for longer term peacebuilding efforts.³¹ The most recent wave of DDR programmes has adapted to meet evolving contexts of violent conflict such as

²⁹ United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations, *Operational Guide to the Integrated Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration Standards* (United Nations: New York, 2014), 25.

³⁰ United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations, *DDR in Peace Operations: A Retrospective* (United Nations: New York, 2010), 16.

³¹ United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations, "Second Generation Disarmament, Demobilisation, and Reintegration (DDR) Practices in Peace Operations: A Contribution to the New Horizon Discussion on Challenges and Opportunities for UN Peacekeeping," United Nations: New York (2010): 3.

those seen in Afghanistan and in Mali, where violent extremism runs in parallel to trafficking, intercommunal tensions, and the presence of transnational fighters.

While funding for these programmes is largely derived from international sources, operations and strategic decisions are made through national commissions to encourage national-led processes. Jaremeý McMullin has questioned the claim of ‘nationally-owned’ processes, using evidence from Liberia to argue that the national commissions may have been just a cover for international actors, resulting in the same group of people setting the parameters and target beneficiary groups of the programmes.³² Arguments put forth by Robert Muggah, however, reveal that national commissions exert significant influence over the processes, as elaborated in his review of DDR processes worldwide.

Notwithstanding these lofty aspirations, on the ground, DDR practitioners across all three generations acknowledge that most, if not all, aspects of DDR are negotiated and decided in the context of highly localised political and economic expediencies. An intensely contested period of bargaining, rather than soaring expectations set from above, defines the parameters of a DDR program, and agreement on basic political preconditions is fundamental to the exercise. While some of this negotiation takes places in the “formal” domain—among donors, national state representatives and agencies—much occurs informally, out of sight of the international aid community, among project implementers, former commanders, combatants, community elites and others. The negotiation of DDR is often stop-and-go, contentious and rarely satisfactory to all parties involved.³³

Personal experience from Côte d’Ivoire similarly revealed that national commissions had significant influence over the processes, adapting the

³² Jaremeý McMullin, *Ex-combatants and the Post-Conflict State: Challenges of Reintegration* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 235-6.

³³ Muggah, “Next-Generation Disarmament, Demobilisation, and Reintegration.”

parameters of the programme to meet local needs, for better or for worse.³⁴ This insight is relevant in that it sheds light on one of the ways that local contexts exert influence on, and help shape the nature and dynamics of internationally-sponsored stabilisation programmes. In this sense, such insight acknowledges a degree of localised agency at the institutional level, that may or may not be extended to the individual levels. When recognising the ability of local partners to negotiate the parameters of the programme, it is important to understand whether post-conflict actors from all political inclinations have equal stakes in shaping post-conflict periods, or whether influence over such programmes remains concentrated in the hands of a few. The issue of political plurality in post-conflict periods is complex and operates on multiple levels, and as such, requires a more in-depth examination of individual political engagement activities across ex-combatants with competing political orientations. The research presented in this thesis sheds light on issues of political plurality, as it is understood by the Ivorian ex-combatants themselves.

The emphasis that DDR programmes place on neutral, inclusive, but nevertheless technical definitions has moved attention away from the political behaviour of ex-combatants, placing priority analysis on whether they were successful in reintegration or not. As such, the post-conflict experiences of ex-combatants have typically been reduced to one desirable goal: reintegration back into non-violent civilian life and the ability to forge a meaningful livelihood beyond armed combat. Within the context of DDR programmes in Sub-Saharan Africa, the programme and its associated policies have been examined primarily from “the imminent goals they themselves set out to deal with”, such as immediate socioeconomic reinsertion, with much less emphasis on the longer-term implications of these programmes, such as equal inclusion in the post-conflict polity.³⁵ This programmatic departure from veterans as political blocks to ex-combatants as a technical category generalises both the wartime

³⁴ Examples of positive impacts of ‘localised’ commissions would include more nuanced understandings of the conflicts and actors, while examples of negative consequences would be local capture by a handful of political elites, thus setting parameters that are biased and exclusive.

³⁵ Johanna Söderström, “The political consequences of reintegration programmes in current peace-building: a framework for analysis,” *Conflict, Security & Development* 13, no. 1 (2013): 88.

and post-conflict experiences with limited capacity to reveal the complex nature of post-conflict state transitions. By reducing these experiences to the one-dimensional aim of reintegration, this type of analysis nullifies the complexity of both the causes and effects of conflict and overlooks the political dimensions of immediate post-conflict societies. My analysis elucidates the complexities of the term 'ex-combatant' and demonstrates that in the post-conflict social context of Côte d'Ivoire, it is a highly ambiguous and political term.

In response to early DDR programmes, several critiques emerged highlighting their failure to optimise the reintegration of high-risk ex-combatants. Studies focusing on the programmes themselves drew attention to issues of heavy bureaucracy, limited degrees of contextual sensitivity, questionable rates of participation³⁶, and sub-standard delivery of skills training for ex-combatants.³⁷ When examining ex-combatant reintegration, frequently cited challenges included low levels of employable skills, on-going health problems, difficulty gaining access to land for housing and business, psychological stress,³⁸ and a reluctance of communities to accept returnees.³⁹ For some, combat experience in armed groups demonstrated increased organisational capacities, allowing groups to more efficiently and credibly threaten violence and to engage in collective action. By extending this new-found social capital into peaceful contexts, the authors suggested that such enhanced organisation capacities may be a liability to peace.⁴⁰ The framing of ex-combatants as high-

³⁶ For examples please see: Nikkie Wiegink, "Former Military Networks a Threat to Peace? The Demobilisation and Remobilisation of Renamo in Central Mozambique," *Stability: International Journal of Security and Development* 4, no. 1 (2015): 1-2627; Antonio Giustozzi, "Post-conflict disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration: Bringing state-building back," from the series *Global security in a changing world* ed. by Nana K. Poku and John Ferguson (London: Routledge, 2012); Jairo Munive, "Context Matters: The Conventional DDR Template is Challenged in South Sudan," *International Peacekeeping* 20, no. 5 (2013): 585-599.

³⁷ Christiana Solomon and Jeremy Ginifer, "Disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration in Sierra Leone," from the project *DDR and Human Security: Post Conflict Security building in the Interests of the Poor*, Centre for International Cooperation and Security (Bratford: University of Bratford, 2008): 5.

³⁸ Kees Kingma, "Demobilisation of Combatants After Civil Wars in Africa and their Reintegration into Civil Life," *Policy Sciences* 30, no. 3 (1997): 155.

³⁹ Mathew Osborne, Ben D'Exelle, and Arjan Verschoor, "Truly Reconciled? A Dyadic Analysis of Post-Conflict Social Reintegration in Northern Uganda," *Journal of Peace Research* 55, no. 1 (2017): 107-121.

⁴⁰ Saumitra Jha and Steven Wilkinson, "Does combat experience foster organisational skill? Evidence from ethnic cleansing during partition of South Asia," *The American Political Science Review* 106, no. 4 (2012): 884.

risk individuals in the post-conflict state equally placed emphasis on the risks they pose to peace and stability if left disgruntled and idle. Examples of factors making them high-risk include their potential to remobilise, their potential delinquency, and their ability to join criminal organisations and/or cross-border mercenary activities, thus threatening the delicate peace and security emerging from a post-conflict settlement.⁴¹ Ex-combatants who were idle and have felt redundant in South African post-conflict society, for instance, were expected to be amongst the first to engage in crime, to trigger social unrest, and to engage in renewed hostilities as a way “to give justification to their lives.”⁴² In such cases, crime was identified as a natural response to economic hardship, showcasing some of the violent skills that ex-combatants had acquired.⁴³ In post-conflict Liberia, a significant ex-combatant presence in the post-conflict period was treated as a widespread problem with potential long-term effects on the political stability of the country. Liberian ex-combatants, however, behaved in an opposite way. They rarely voiced political preferences or expressions of dissent in the post-conflict period, in an effort to avoid open conflict or to be perceived as instigating conflict. As some of the first academic analyses of ex-combatants emerging from African civil wars, the studies listed above helped to establish the initial narratives of ex-combatants as inherently threatening to post-conflict peace, placing a discourse of distinctness between them and the larger society. In much of the discourse, ex-combatants are constructed as ‘outlaws’ and ‘threats’ that are in need of management by the post-conflict state with the guidance of the international community.⁴⁴ While such a view stresses their distinctness within a given society, it ultimately constructs an acontextual view of ex-combatants across wartime contexts that are highly variable.⁴⁵ Jaremeý McMullin has argued against the dominant narrative surrounding ex-

⁴¹ Enzo Nussio, “How Ex-Combatants Talk About Personal Security: Narratives of Former ParaMilitary in Colombia,” *Conflict, Security, and Development* 11, no. 5 (2011): 580; Hugo De Vries and Nikkie Wiegink, “Breaking up and Going Home? Contesting Two Assumptions in the Demobilisation and Reintegration of Former Combatants,” *International Peacekeeping* 18, no. 1 (2011): 38.

⁴² Mashike, “You are a time bomb...,” 87.

⁴³ Mashike, “You are a time bomb...,” 100.

⁴⁴ McMullin, “Integration or Separation?,” 389.

⁴⁵ Metsola, “Reintegration as Recognition,” 27.

combatants, concluding that such narratives do more to differentiate them than to help with their integration.⁴⁶

Alternatively, research from Johanna Söderström demonstrates how these programmes gave political voice to ex-combatants. Söderström argues that through the acquisition of resources such as knowledge, self-esteem, and a new identity, ex-combatants bolstered their capacity to become active members of society. These gains were seen to be supported by institutional and procedural traits practiced in the programmes that promote democratic norms.⁴⁷ The data presented in chapters 3,4,5, and 6 of this thesis demonstrate how Ivoirian ex-combatants chose political actions in accordance to their perceptions of the political climate in the post-conflict period, rather than out of idleness and frustration.

In partial response to the shortcomings listed above, there has been a positive shift in research that challenges the assumption of ex-combatants as high-risk individuals. Research that links ex-combatants with criminal organisations found that the majority of ex-combatants, regardless of their employment status, simply did not possess the social networks or opportunities required to get involved in criminal organisations.⁴⁸ Adding to this, a recent study by Anders Themnér observed that ex-combatants were largely risk-averse individuals in the post-conflict state.⁴⁹ Taking ex-combatant trajectories from Sierra Leone and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, ex-combatant violence and remobilisation was contingent on the convergence of multiple factors, including military affinities, intermediaries, and incentives. Furthermore, other studies have challenged assumptions of demobilisation as an integral part of lasting peace and stability. In one study comparing demobilisation in Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Sudan, and Colombia, research

⁴⁶ McMullin, *Ex-combatants and the Post-Conflict State: Challenges of Reintegration*; McMullin, "Integration or Separation?," 386.

⁴⁷ Söderström, "The political consequences of reintegration programmes in current peace-building," 87.

⁴⁸ Jaremeý McMullin, "Organized criminal groups and conflict: the nature and consequences of interdependence," *Civil Wars* 11, no 1 (2009): 93.

⁴⁹ Anders Themnér, "A Leap of Faith: When and How Ex-Combatants Resort to Violence," *Security Studies* 22, no. 2 (2013): 296.

showed how the social ties that war provided ex-combatants positively impacted their social integration allowing shared experiences to transcend social barriers.⁵⁰ Finally, evidence from Liberia demonstrated that ex-combatants who were mid-level commanders had a positive impact on peace and security when incorporated as brokers of daily services such as transport. Additionally, demobilised commanders in Liberia were seen to have the potential as mediators between governing elites and ex-combatants. Their ability was due, in large part, to their direct access to ex-combatants, as well as their ability to distribute goods, jobs, money, food, and scholarships.⁵¹ In such situations, commanders acted as brokers to bring employment opportunities to their former rank-and-file ex-combatants.⁵² For instance, the motorcycle taxi services that flourished in post-conflict Liberia and Sierra Leone greatly benefitted from ex-combatant presence as they extended affordable and flexible transport services to residents, all the while satisfying their need for income. Despite these successes, however, motorcycle transport remains stigmatised by local residents who associate the service with brutal individuals and petty crime.⁵³ Adding to the research on positive ex-combatant experiences is that of William Reno that highlights the ways in which Liberian and Sierra Leonean warlords and their affiliated wartime social networks used their commercial activities to build social and political support within their communities and amongst their ex-combatant followers.⁵⁴ Reno highlighted the benefits of this legacy, allowing some to launch successful electoral campaigns and others to protect themselves and their associates from political marginalisation and prosecution. Together, these studies, have greatly advanced images of ex-combatants in the post-conflict state, adding nuance to

⁵⁰ De Vries and Wiegink, "Breaking up and Going Home?," 38.

⁵¹ Mats Utas, Anders Themnér and Emy Lindberg, "Commanders for good and bad: Alternative post-war reconstruction and ex-commanders in Liberia," *NAI Policy Notes* (2014): 3.

⁵² Utas, Themnér, and Lindberg, "Commanders for good and bad," 2-3.

⁵³ Anne Menzel, "Between Ex-Combatization and Opportunities for Peace: The Double-Edged Qualities of Motorcycle-Taxi Driving in Urban Post-war Sierra Leone," *Africa Today* 58, no. 2 (2011): 98.

⁵⁴ William Reno, "Transforming West African militia networks for post-war recovery," in *Troubled Regions and Failing States: The Clustering and Contagion of Armed Conflicts*, *Comparative Social Research* 27 (2015):127-149; William Reno, "Illicit Markets, Violence, Warlords, and Governance: West African Cases," *Crime, Law and Social Change* 52, no.3 (2009): 316.

the dominant view of them as destabilising factors to the post-conflict period. Moreover, these studies suggest that the social networks established amongst combatants during the war, whether through informal armed groups or through strict military hierarchies remained rather robust in the post-conflict period. The phenomenon of ex-combatants keeping their social networks intact in the post-conflict period was equally observed in Côte d'Ivoire for all groups across the political divides. The insight generated by the aforementioned studies is relevant for this thesis as it provides precedence for Ivoirian ex-combatant experiences to build on. The data presented in this thesis further demonstrates how social networks of ex-combatants provide momentum to stake claims, to contain political action, or to abstain altogether. For Ivoirian ex-combatants with feelings of defeat, wartime networks remained firmly intact, while for those considered as the victors, they were used on the basis of convenience.

As demonstrated, the term 'ex-combatant' tends to characterise these individuals as an overly homogenous group, which is indicative of a more pervasive set of beliefs. Simplifying ex-combatant experiences in the post-conflict period ultimately stems from a reductive reading of their participation and, arguably, an under-estimation of their agency as individuals. In one of the first articles to shed light on the nuances of Ivoirian combatant experiences, Magali Chelapi-Den Hamer noted the variation in armed group participation of pro-Gbagbo militias in the rural southwest. With the fluid composition of the groups, Chelapi-Den Hamer reveals the challenges of distinguishing ex-combatants from general supporters of the cause. In some cases, individuals may have considered themselves as 'combatants' only for a short period, usually during a violent event, while others maintained their combatant identity years after a violent episode. While some were amongst the first to be recruited, others joined much after the violent periods, with opportunistic motives. Others still, were recruited locally, very close to where they lived, while some were tasked with relocating to support the war effort.⁵⁵ Understanding the motivations of why individuals mobilised and joined the armed groups can shed significant

⁵⁵ Magali Chelapi-Den Hamer, "Les tribulations du dispositif Désarmement, démobilisation et réinsertion des miliciens en Côte d'Ivoire (2003-2015)," *Hérodote* 158, no. 3 (2015): 212.

light on what they may look forward to in the post-conflict period. For individuals who joined for an ideological cause, a simple victory or defeat may suffice in the post-conflict period. For others who joined for more opportunistic reasons such as financial reward, more complex post-conflict trajectories are likely to follow. While this thesis is limited in its ability to trace individual trajectories from armed group mobilisation to post-conflict political engagement, it opens interesting avenues for future research. Cases such as Mali provide an intriguing terrain for such research as the warring parties continue to negotiate the peace agreement, while a number of new armed groups simultaneously emerge and demand inclusion in the political negotiations.⁵⁶ As made clear, the experiences of combatants in this study were highly varied, rather than a common unified wartime experience. Although its focus was on the wartime experiences, it presents itself as a sort of precursor to understanding that the combatant/ex-combatant experience is not uniform. The insights presented from these studies demonstrate the evolution in analysis around issues of 'ex-combatants', as well as underscore the need for more nuance across highly varied experiences. This thesis builds on the more recent insights of ex-combatant politics by mapping the different types of post-conflict political actions taken by Ivoirian ex-combatants. In doing so, it sheds light on the inherently political undertones of the label and the ways in which it is used in the post-conflict period.

Social Reconfigurations during Violent Conflict

Alongside the increased nuance around the topic of ex-combatants, there has been a similar movement to understand how violent wars can produce reconfiguring effects on local social, political, and economic orders. This body of research, while generally analysing at the societal level, has called for more flexibility in how civil wars are understood, as well as the ways in which their legacies affect post-conflict orders. As summarized by Terrence Lyons,

⁵⁶ Political Affairs Officer, discussion with the author at the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali, July 10, 2018, phone discussion.

“war destroys certain types of political institutions but provides the settings for others to thrive in.”⁵⁷ Conflicts are multi-faceted, requiring careful examination to understand their full spectrum of implications on the post-conflict period.

A growing number of studies have recognised the ways in which local populations adapt their lives around ongoing violent conflict.⁵⁸ In some cases, order and governance emerge locally during times of violent conflict.⁵⁹ Research specific to Africa has demonstrated that when conflict erupts and the formal institutions of government are diminished, “alternative forms of control and management establish themselves”.⁶⁰ Timothy Raeymaekers’ research on eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) reveals how political power develops in acutely localised contexts, beyond the reach of official state power.⁶¹ In these cases, the prevailing conventions of government are transformed by local actors ‘on the margins’, but who have managed to fill spaces between receding state power and expanding market areas. Social and political spaces are altered as a result of the brokering functions these individuals play across various geographical zones and localised political orders.⁶² Examples of alternative forms of control and management include trade that continues through unconventional and makeshift channels, including a range of actors from businessmen, middlemen, soldiers, and petty traders. Raeymaekers demonstrates how in eastern DRC, the economic activities of the Nande traders effectively bridged communal methods of exchange with global capitalist orders, resulting in a socially stratified space during times of uncertainty and crisis.⁶³ Similar observations were made in Côte d’Ivoire,

⁵⁷ Terrence Lyons, “Victorious rebels and postwar politics,” *Civil Wars* 18, no.2 (2016): 167.

⁵⁸ For examples see Patricia Justino, Tilman Brück, and Philip Verwimp, *A Micro-Level Perspective on the Dynamics of Conflict, Violence, and Development* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014); Stephen C. Lubkemann, *Culture in Chaos: An Anthropology of the Social Condition in War* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008).

⁵⁹ Ana Arjona, “Wartime Institutions,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 58, no. 8 (2014); Zachariah Cherien Mampilly, *Rebel rulers: Insurgent Governance and Civilian Life During War* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011).

⁶⁰ Mats Utas, “Introduction: Bigmanity and Network Governance in African Conflicts,” *African Conflicts and Informal Power* (London, Uppsala: Zed Books, Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 2012), 2.

⁶¹ Timothy Raeymaekers, *Violent Capitalism and Hybrid Identity in the Eastern Congo: Power to the Margins* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

⁶² Raeymaekers, *Violent Capitalism and Hybrid Identity in the Eastern Congo Power to the Margins*, 2.

⁶³ Raeymaekers, *Violent Capitalism and Hybrid Identity in the Eastern Congo Power to the Margins*, 67.

describing how informal economies adapted and flourished during the conflict through their provision of crisis-related documents, propaganda, and services. These new conflict-themed markets emerged through the efforts of individuals who otherwise would have remained economically marginalised during the interwar period.⁶⁴

Elisabeth Wood's 2008 article provides a theoretical foundation from which the transformative effects of conflict on social processes can be examined. In this article, Wood identifies six social processes that are impacted by armed conflict: political mobilisation, military socialisation, the polarisation of social identities, the militarisation of local authority, the transformation of gender roles, and finally, the fragmentation of the local political economy.⁶⁵ Civil wars, she argues, can radically affect the pace and direction of these processes, resulting in a reconfiguration of local social orders. During such reconfigurations, potential exists for the development of new social orders, the dissolution of others, or a changed internal structure.⁶⁶ Recognising that both the processes of normalisation and the creation of order during times of conflict require a certain degree of agency from local populations sets the grounds to observe whether post-conflict transitions have become more inclusive, or whether the same power brokers and systems of governance recreate themselves. This thesis is motivated by Wood's framework and the potential for inclusive political order to emerge in the post-conflict period. It concludes, however, that post-conflict political orders remain largely exclusive, as the perceptions of the participating individuals themselves ultimately determine who will participate and who will not.

Moving beyond the societal level, recent studies also explored wartime configurations at the individual level of analysis. Reconfigurations of order, in these studies, involve the emergence of new actors, likened to middle-men, who utilise a combination of social networks and incentives to mobilise

⁶⁴ Richard Banégas, "Gouverner par la parole: Parlements de la rue, pratiques oratoires et subjectivation politique en Côte d'Ivoire," *Politique Africaine* 3 (2012): 21.

⁶⁵ Elisabeth Wood, "The Social Processes of Civil War: The Wartime Transformation of Social Networks," *Annual Review of Political Science* 11 (2008): 539.

⁶⁶ Wood, "The Social Processes of Civil War," 539.

combatants into armed groups as they themselves gain prominence. Violent conflict, in this regard, has been seen to open spaces for new actors to emerge, re-shaping the distribution of power and influence across a new set of actors.⁶⁷ Similarly, in seeking to identify the conditions in which ex-combatants remobilise and move from aggrieved individuals to a collective violent enterprise, Anders Themnér develops the concept of “entrepreneurs of violence” and shows how the opportunities to re-engage in violence are facilitated by the presence of three intervening variables: military affinities, the use of intermediaries, and the provision of selective incentives. As a recruitment strategy, the political and military elites or the ‘entrepreneurs of violence’, make use of intermediaries such as mid-level commanders and ‘second-tier’ individuals. These individuals are useful because of their proximity and direct contact with ex-combatants and their communities.⁶⁸ Studies specific to Côte d’Ivoire have begun to explore these dynamics through the concept of ‘*ascension sociale*’, akin to upward mobility for social, economic, and political standing within a society. Throughout the conflict, a variety of individuals emerged, either as vigilante group leaders and their “*gbohn*” (Ivoirian slang for “youth-followers”), or as independent actors attempting to display their status as ‘big men’. Their objectives in doing so were to capitalise on perceived incentives allocated to commanders and leaders of armed groups.⁶⁹ Many combatants affiliated with the pro-Gbagbo movement followed a similar logic when attempting to establish themselves as fierce leaders with loyal followers, as they saw this as one of the ways in which they could climb in social, economic, and political stature.⁷⁰ Together, these cases demonstrate that violent conflict can foster the emergence of new actors and power brokers, many of which may extend their influence into the post-conflict period. These studies demonstrate the possibility of individual transformations. Carrying these

⁶⁷ Utas, “Introduction,” 1-31.

⁶⁸ Themnér, “A Leap of Faith,” 297.

⁶⁹ Banégas, “Gouverner par la parole,” 21; K Arnaut, “Corps habillés, Nouchis and Subaltern Bigmanity in Côte d’Ivoire,” *African Conflicts and Informal Power*, eds. Mats Utas & Nordiska Afrikainstitutet (London, Uppsala: Zed Books, Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 2012), 79.

⁷⁰ Gnangadjomon Koné, “Logiques sociales et politiques des pillages et barrages dans la crise post-électorale en Côte d’Ivoire,” *Politique Africaine* 2 (2011): 145.

findings forward, this thesis includes individual-level analysis of political engagement in post-conflict Côte d'Ivoire.

If conflict can produce such transformations, then, it should equally allow for a reconfiguration of political norms, empowering new sets of actors and altering past political behaviour. Although academic researchers are increasingly aware of the transformative effects of armed conflict on the structures of society, the standing assumption amongst many policy-makers is that violent conflict has more costs to society than it does benefits, therefore, reinforcing the current conception of post-conflict peacebuilding as restorative of pre-conflict orders and power distributions.⁷¹ William Reno has made successive calls for a renewed understanding of conflict, effectively demonstrating how post-conflict peace-builders need be mindful of the shifted distributions of powers. Analysts who are mindful of such reconfigurations can provide more nuanced readings of the broader post-conflict periods, as well as the actors who participate and shape its trajectories.

Recently, there has been a growing body of research of the transformation of armed actors into political actors across various types of conflict. This area of study provides a bridge to the common examinations of ex-combatants in the post-conflict state and that of post-conflict transformations more generally. In these studies, analysis is carried out at the group level, examining how armed groups transition into political parties, and identifying what might account for their successes or failures.⁷² One study that examined the transformation of the Colombian armed group M19 into a political party, found that, within the group, levels of political mobilisation varied significantly after the its military victory.⁷³ Within the former M19, political trajectories were broken down into three main categories: *the resilient* who sustained or

⁷¹ Reno, "Illicit markets, violence, warlords, and governance," 313.

⁷² For examples, see John Ishiyama and Anna Batta, "Swords into plowshares: The organisational transformation of rebel groups into political parties," *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 44, no. 4 (2011): 369–79 (example of transition to political parties), and M.E. Allison, "The legacy of violence on post-civil war elections: The case of El Salvador," *Studies in Comparative International Development* 45, no.1 (2010):104–24 (for electoral success).

⁷³ Johanna Söderström, "The Resilient, the Remobilised, and the Removed: Party Mobilisation among Former M19 Combatants," *Civil Wars* 18, no. 2 (2016): 228.

increased their political mobilisation efforts; *the remobilised* whose political participation dropped but who were gradually becoming revived due to renewed support for the party's ideals, and finally; *the removed*, whose participation dwindled and showed little signs of revival.⁷⁴

Where analysis is still budding is in the study of these very actors beyond the initial transition period, including internal party dynamics.⁷⁵ Moreover, as this thesis identifies, political mobilisation efforts of ex-combatants need not necessarily be restricted to collective organisations. The position of this thesis is consistent with that of Johanna Söderström in that one can “expect different dynamics during different periods of the ex-combatants’ life”,⁷⁶ thus placing importance on the potential for transformation over time. Where this thesis contributes to academic discussions is through its analysis of various levels of political mobilisation within five to six years into the post-conflict period. Its analysis encompasses group mobilisation, through both formal and informal channels, as well as individual efforts from those who sit at the margins of political influence. Despite the potential for violent conflict to trigger social and political reconfigurations that carry into the post-conflict state, evidence collected five to six years into Côte d’Ivoire’s post-conflict period demonstrates that the political norms of the post-independence period have continued into the post-conflict period. Data collected on how and when ex-combatants choose to politically engage with the state demonstrate that individual expectations of politics drive individual decisions on how, when, and who can engage in political claims-making. In other words, the practices of clientelistic governance that Ivoirian ex-combatants have come to expect operate both as a catalyst and as a constraint for political action. In this sense, clientelism is a pre-condition for political claims-making and for the more disruptive methods of political engagement. As this thesis demonstrates, political engagement of ex-combatants in Côte d’Ivoire has been unequal, with some groups choosing more vocal and disruptive routes, and others, the most experienced fighters,

⁷⁴ Söderström, “The Resilient, the Remobilised, and the Removed,” 220.

⁷⁵ Gyda Marås Sindre and Johanna Söderström, “Understanding Armed Groups and Party Politics,” *Civil Wars* 18, no.2 (2016): 110.

⁷⁶ Söderström, “The Resilient, the Remobilised, and the Removed,” 215. Emphasis copied from original text.

disengaging altogether. This finding runs counter to standing assumptions that battle-hardened ex-combatants engage in more disruptive forms of political mobilisation.

Noting the variation found across groups of ex-combatants in Côte d'Ivoire also brings about the question of whether the post-conflict period offers the same playing field to all formerly armed groups, or if it is more conducive to some over others. Researchers addressing this question have theorized that the way in which a conflict ends has an impact on the post-conflict transition process, and subsequently the ways in which formerly armed actors engage politically. These studies examine the ways in which civil wars were won, either through a military victory or through a negotiated political settlement.⁷⁷ Research from Monica D. Toft contends that civil wars that end in rebel victory are more likely to bring about democratic outcomes. The reasoning behind this is that victorious insurgents who go on to form governments in the post-conflict period likely have demonstrated military capabilities to dissuade spoilers and incentives to govern in a just manner.⁷⁸ In such cases, victorious insurgencies wield legitimacy from local constituents, as well as from the international community, making the "victor's peace" potentially more stable and democratic.⁷⁹ Research countering these claims, such as the study by Fortna and Huang have contended that insurgent victories did not necessarily result in democratic outcomes, while Terrence Lyons has demonstrated that insurgent victory had the reverse impact, making authoritarian regimes more likely, thus creating a situation of "we rule because we won".⁸⁰ Lyons differentiates traditional political parties from those of rebel-formed political parties, noting that the latter were not created to win elections, but rather "as military

⁷⁷ Lyons, "Victorious Rebels and Postwar Politics," 162.

⁷⁸ Monica Duffy Toft, *Securing the Peace: The Durable Settlement of Civil War* (Princeton, NY: Princeton University Press, 2010), 7-8.

⁷⁹ Toft, *Securing the Peace*, 7-8.

⁸⁰ Virginia Page Fortna and Reyko Huang, "Democratization After Civil War: A Brush-Clearing Exercise," *International Studies Quarterly* 56 (2012): 801-8; Terrence Lyons, "The Importance of Winning: Victorious Insurgent Groups and Authoritative Politics," *Comparative Politics* 48, no.2 (2016): 171.

organisations focused on winning armed struggle.”⁸¹ In post-conflict periods, these armed groups turned political groups may benefit from wartime fatigue amongst the population, and are in turn more likely to gain credibility through their military victory.

Looking more specifically at civil wars that ended in insurgent victory, Terrence Lyons has identified several conditions that determine whether a victorious insurgent government will be strong or weak in the post-conflict period. Amongst the conditions identified are the length of the civil war, the size of the area that it encompassed (and that rebels controlled), and finally, the extent of external interference. When taken together, Lyons contends that if an insurgent army gained experience effectively controlling a large area for a long period of time, with little external influence, it would be more likely to form a strong government in the post-conflict period, as is the case in Ethiopia.⁸² A victorious insurgent regime would likely demonstrate attributes such as cohesive leadership, internal discipline, a well-structured hierarchy, and would have established patterns of military administration over territories under their control.⁸³ Should an insurgency not be able to meet these conditions, as is the case in the DRC, the post-conflict government would more likely be weak with little control of its territory.⁸⁴ Such understandings can shed important light on how larger societies move past violence and transcend war.⁸⁵

In the case of Côte d'Ivoire, analysis on the ways its conflict ended are making important strides. Giulia Piccolino relates how Côte d'Ivoire's conflict came to end by a decisive military defeat of the FRCI over Laurent Gbagbo.⁸⁶ In the analysis, Piccolino defends the choice of 'victor's peace' to describe the post-conflict period in Côte d'Ivoire. While my analysis supports the notion, especially with its influence in shaping political behaviours of ex-combatants, it

⁸¹ Terrence Lyons. "From Victorious Rebels to Strong Authoritarian Parties: Prospects for Post-War Democratization," *Democratization* 23, no.6 (2016): 1026.

⁸² Lyons, "Victorious Rebels and Postwar Politics," 161.

⁸³ Lyons, "From victorious rebels to strong authoritarian parties," 1026.

⁸⁴ Lyons, "Victorious Rebels and Postwar Politics," 161.

⁸⁵ Sindre and Söderström, "Understanding armed groups and party politics," 110-111.

⁸⁶ Giulia Piccolino, "Peacebuilding and Statebuilding in Côte d'Ivoire: A Victor's Peace?," *African Affairs, advance publication*, (2018): 1-24, <https://doi.org/10.1093/afraf/ady020>.

hesitates to classify Côte d'Ivoire as a decisive military victory. In the article, the military victory is attributed to the pro-Ouattara Forces Nouvelles/FRCI, with indirect acknowledgement of the role of the French forces and the United Nations (UN).⁸⁷ To this day, this is highly contested amongst Ivoirians. Much of the success on the battlefield of 2010-2011 in Abidjan during the post-electoral crisis, the period under Piccolino's examination, were won by the Commando Invisibles, a group that my interview data demonstrates has faced the highest rates of persecution in the post-conflict state. In keeping with understandings put forth by Lyons above, the case of Côte d'Ivoire is not clear cut. While my thesis maintains that the FN insurgent group obtained a political victory, it is wary of claims of a decisive military victory by the FN/FRCI. Moreover, my analysis demonstrates that much of the reluctance that the current Gbagbo supporters and youth of the Commando Invisibles have, when recognising the Ouattara government as legitimate, stems from the fact that they perceive the international community to have militarily secured Ouattara's position, rather than a decisive military victory of the pro-Ouattara Forces Nouvelles/ FRCI.

Political Continuities in Post-Conflict Côte d'Ivoire

This analysis of Côte d'Ivoire focuses on the opportunities and constraints for political engagement, as identified by the ex-combatants themselves. The variation of political engagement activities across groups of Ivoirian ex-combatants is explained by the country's historical practices of governance, notions of 'victor's justice', and finally, for those opportunistic individuals, the enduring secrecy surrounding key events of the crisis. This thesis, therefore, follows Kriger with respect to the emphasis it places on history and politics to understand the political opportunities available to ex-combatants in post-conflict Côte d'Ivoire. Additionally, it also supports the argument of William Reno that pre-existing political orders have a significant impact on the organisation of armed groups during conflict. In his study *Warfare in*

⁸⁷ Piccolino, "Peacebuilding and Statebuilding in Côte d'Ivoire: A Victor's Peace?," 3.

Independent Africa,⁸⁸ Reno demonstrates how the behaviour and organisation of armed insurgent groups are influenced by the pre-war political contexts in which the groups emerged. Reno classifies the Ivoirian armed groups as 'warlord rebels', suggesting that the leaders of these groups replicated the same political structures from which they emerged, "appropriate[ing] the existing instruments of political power and us[ing] them in even more intensive ways at the expense of building bureaucratic institutions."⁸⁹ Consistent with Reno's analysis, much of the data gathered for this thesis supports the argument that many of Côte d'Ivoire's rebel leaders did emerge from within the ranks of the national military and from close knit political circles, and have since taken lucrative positions in the larger security sector.⁹⁰ My analysis builds on Reno's argument, extending the influence of post-independence political norms into the post-conflict period, in which ex-combatants, and the larger society more broadly, have come to expect and recreate similar patterns of governance.

More broadly, this thesis fits into the larger contentious political literature, identifying clientelistic ties as a necessary pre-requisite for claims-making in the post-conflict period. As such, it touches on the notion of political opportunity structures, as defined by Sidney Tarrow. Political opportunity structures imply the following:

Consistent but not necessarily formal or permanent dimensions of the political environment that provide incentives for people to undertake collective action by affecting their expectations for success or failure.⁹¹

In this sense, political opportunities significantly shape and condition the ways in which political contention manifests itself. It equally influences the methods,

⁸⁸ William Reno, *Warfare in Independent Africa*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 5.

⁸⁹ Reno, *Warfare in Independent Africa*, 164.

⁹⁰ United Nations Security Council, Final report of the Group of Experts on Côte d'Ivoire pursuant to paragraph 27 of Security Council resolution 2219 (2015), http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_2016_254.pdf.

⁹¹ Sidney Tarrow, *Power in Social Movements* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 189.

frequently referred to as repertoires, used by those engaging in contention.⁹² As applicable to the case of Côte d'Ivoire, the expectation of specific practices of governance, learned in the post-independence period, influences behaviour in the post-conflict period, which ultimately recreates the same political norms that existed before. As such, the notion of violent conflict as a transformative experience for post-conflict social orders is significant. While elites and former warlords ("ComZones" as named in Côte d'Ivoire) rose to prominence throughout the conflict and managed to maintain their political, economic, and social influence in the post-conflict period, the reconfigurations of social order to a more inclusive state were bleak for the general population, including groups of ex-combatants who did not position themselves favourably with the ruling regime.

Clientelism and Systems of Post-Independence Governance

The dominant framework for understanding governance in Sub-Saharan Africa has been that of patrimonialism and patron-client exchanges — concepts that have been used to explain the shortcomings of developing states to maximize their economic and political potential. The concepts, broadly, have been applied to situations in which relationships of loyalty and dependency influence formal political and administrative procedures, despite the presence of bureaucratic institutions and procedures.⁹³ Several causes of these exchanges have been put forth by academics, with explanations including factors such as a small public realm, the strength of clan-centred relations, ethnicity and sub-national identities, the historical predilection of dyadic, two-way exchanges in rural societies, and as a form of informal social assurance to weather difficult economic environments.⁹⁴ In such cases, any given position of

⁹² Outi Keranen, "International Statebuilding as Contentious Politics: the Case of Post-Conflict Bosnia and Herzegovina," *Nationalities Papers* 41, no. 3 (2013): 363.

⁹³ Daniel C. Bach, "Patrimonialism and Neopatrimonialism: comparative trajectories and readings," *Commonwealth and Comparative Politics* 49, no. 3 (2011): 276-7.

⁹⁴ Nicolas Van de Walle, "Presidentialism and Clientelism in Africa's Emerging Party System," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 41, no.2 (2003): 311.

power obtained by an individual would likely be valued for the resources and opportunities that it would provide to the individual's family and kin.⁹⁵ Early conceptions of this type of governance were similarly put forth by Jean-François Bayart to analyse how inter-elite exchanges and competition were used to take power and maintain political stability and dominance. In his analysis, Bayart took a state-centric approach to describe how power was determined by control of, or access to, the State. To ensure political stability, state resources were used to forge alliances with different groups of social, political, and economic elites. This elite-centred method of distribution often took the form of overt power-sharing arrangements, encouraging support across power-brokers and allowing for the preservation of the status quo.⁹⁶ Building on Bayart's argument, Michael Bratton and Nicolas Van de Walle explained how the distribution of state resources in clientelistic ways promoted a political stability that also carried into periods of political transition, such as after elections with regime change.⁹⁷ This thesis supports this argument by suggesting that political expectations premised on past practices significantly influence the political behaviours of individuals in the post-conflict state.

Clientelistic exchanges, as they pertain to a variety of African cases, however, may not always be negative. In Chabal and Daloz' seminal book *Africa Works*, the authors highlight how "power is personalized and [...] legitimacy continues primarily to rest on practices of redistribution."⁹⁸ Moreover, they demonstrate how clientelistic exchanges need not only support the status quo of the political elite but can also serve a more general constituency. In this sense, distribution to the community (across various understandings of 'community') can serve the common good, rather than simply individualistic enrichment.⁹⁹ The notion of distribution to communities in need was recently

⁹⁵ Van de Walle, "Presidentialism and Clientelism in Africa's Emerging Party System", 311.

⁹⁶ Patrick Chabal, "L'Etat En Afrique: La Politique Du Ventre," *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-)* 66, no. 3 (1990): 627.

⁹⁷ Michael Bratton and Nicholas Van De Walle, *Democratic Experiments in Africa: Regime Transitions in Comparative Perspective*, Cambridge Studies in Comparative Politics (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 242.

⁹⁸ Patrick Chabal and Jean-Pascal Daloz, *Africa Works: Disorder as Political Instrument*, *African Issues*, International African Institute in association with James Currey (Oxford; Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), 2.

⁹⁹ Chabal and Daloz, *Africa Works*, 53, 100-1.

brought up in an interview for this thesis, where a self-proclaimed hard-line supporter of Laurent Gbagbo called for a more humanistic interpretation of how pro-Ouattara former ComZones were carrying out the distribution of benefits to 'their own'. In this explanation, which came to the defence of his perceived adversary, the distribution of state resources to the base of ethnic and political supporters of Ouattara was a natural and humane way of helping those in precarious socioeconomic situations.¹⁰⁰

Over several decades, researchers applied notions of clientelism to their studies in both developing and developed countries, with large amounts of studies focusing on Southeast Asia and Africa. The widespread application of the term is important to this study because it helps set the general criteria from which clientelistic exchanges can be identified in Ivorian governance. Broadly, clientelistic exchanges have been identified in both authoritarian and democratic societies, and have been observed to, in some cases, fade over time with economic development, or, in other cases, adapt and survive.¹⁰¹ Although a well-developed body of literature has been devoted to clientelistic exchanges, there is a persisting lack of conceptual clarity and consensus for a common definition. Despite the lack of a common definition, several elements of clientelistic exchanges have emerged over time that are important to the theoretical basis of this thesis. First, clientelistic exchanges are characterised by *dyadic relationships*, implying either a face to face transaction, or more recently, a transaction through brokers and social networks. In this sense, "those at the top of the pyramid generate resources that are channelled down the pyramid, while vote and other forms of fealty flow upward."¹⁰² In a 2007 study by Kitschelt and Wilkinson, clientelistic exchanges were also extended to groups, moving analysis beyond transactions of the individual. Through their notion of "collective clientelism", benefits directed at the 'group' were identified as clientelistic if they could be obtained by the in-group but were withheld from

¹⁰⁰ Gbagbo-supporter, Interview with the author in Edinburgh, October 31, 2015, in-person.

¹⁰¹ Allen Hicken, "Clientelism," *The Annual Review of Political Science* 14 (2011): 290.

¹⁰² Anirudh Kirshna, "Politics in the Middle: Mediating Relationships between the Citizens and the State in North India," *Patrons, Clients, and Policies: Patterns of Democratic Accountability and Political Competition*, eds. Herbert Kitschelt and Steven I. Wilkinson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2007), 141-158.

others on the outside.¹⁰³ The notion of collective clientelism is different from political campaigns targeting of specific segments of society, in that the exchange of political support is integral to receiving the benefit. In regulated and transparent political campaigning, membership in the targeted group remains, regardless of whether there is individual political support or not.¹⁰⁴ Second, a clientelistic exchange is also characterised by *contingency/reciprocity*. The element of reciprocity implies that there will be a reciprocal benefit for both parties. In such exchanges, a credible promise of a benefit also serves this function, even if the good of service is not delivered immediately.¹⁰⁵ Third, is that of *hierarchy*. For such an exchange to happen, one individual is usually of higher socioeconomic or political status and can use their influence and access to resources for the benefit of an individual or group in a lower position. In such an asymmetrical relationship, political support is usually offered by those of lower status to secure access to benefits from those of higher status.¹⁰⁶ The fourth and final common element of clientelistic exchanges is that of *iteration*. Clientelistic exchanges have a sense of continuity, differentiating them from one-off exchanges or bribes. In the clientelistic exchange, each side makes decisions in anticipation of future interactions. Should both parties respect the terms of the exchange, a degree of trust can be built over time, resulting in a degree of predictability to the exchange.¹⁰⁷ Recent applications to governance in Africa have followed much of these criteria, often adding emphasis on elite exchanges. In Van de Walle's words:

It is more useful to think of clientelistic politics [in Sub-Saharan Africa] as constituting primarily a mechanism for accommodation and integration of a fairly narrow political elite than as a form of

¹⁰³ Herbert Kitschelt and Steven I. Wilkinson, "Citizen-Politician Linkages: An Introduction," *Patrons, Clients, and Policies: Patterns of Democratic Accountability and Political Competition*, eds. Herbert Kitschelt and Steven I. Wilkinson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2007), 1-49.

¹⁰⁴ Hicken, "Clientelism," 293.

¹⁰⁵ Hicken, "Clientelism," 291.

¹⁰⁶ Hicken, "Clientelism," 292. The element of hierarchy is clearly demonstrated in the study of James Scott, and frequently serves as a cornerstone of research on clientelism, despite its age. See also James C. Scott, "Patron-Client Politics and Political Change in Southeast Asia," *The American Political Science Review* 66, no. 1 (1972): 92.

¹⁰⁷ Hicken, "Clientelism," 292.

mass party patronage. Most of the material gains from clientelism are limited to this elite. The stronger link between political elites and the citizenry is through the less tangible bonds of ethnic identity. Even in the absence of tangible benefits, citizens will choose to vote for individuals of their own ethnic group, particularly in ethnically divided societies. Less than the expectation that they will benefit directly from the vote, citizens may feel that only a member of their own ethnic group may end up defending the interests of the ethnic group as a whole, and that voting for a member of another ethnic group will certainly not do so.¹⁰⁸

Van de Walle's observations are important when considering the case of Côte d'Ivoire, where clientelism has a significant history in the politics of the country. Where Van de Walle's explanation both reflects and departs from the Ivorian case, however, is through its emphasis on ethnic ties. Similarly, voting across party lines remains ethnically-driven, both historically and in the post-conflict period. Where it departs is in the ways that clientelism was practiced during the 33-year reign of Houphouët-Boigny. While building a delicate balance of elite clientelism, Houphouët-Boigny deliberately maintained a top-down system of governance and elite dependency that was fairly representative of ethnic groupings in Côte d'Ivoire. It is through these practices of governance, that Houphouët-Boigny became an iconic ruler, both challenging the negative expectations of clientelistic governance as well as setting the standard for political expectations that would carry through to the post-conflict period. Details of governance in the post-independence period of Côte d'Ivoire are provided in Chapter 4.

Conclusion

This chapter sought to lay the theoretical groundwork necessary to understand the empirical data presented in the chapters that follow. The extensive discussion allowed for the conceptualisation of the ex-combatant

¹⁰⁸ Van de Walle, "Presidentialism and Clientelism in Africa's Emerging Party Systems," 313.

label, the combination of research on veteran compensation, clientelism, and wartime transformations laid the base for understanding the post-conflict transition of Côte d'Ivoire.

In the chapters that follow, the post-independence practices of clientelistic governance will be used to explain why ex-combatant political mobilisation and claims-making takes place the way it does, as well as how it can be seen as a continuation of post-independence political norms. Ex-combatant political mobilisation, this thesis demonstrates, is driven by a bottom-up politicisation of the ex-combatant label, in accordance with expectations of clientelistic exchanges.

Chapter 3: Conducting Research in Post-Conflict Côte d'Ivoire

This chapter describes the analytical intrigue of Côte d'Ivoire as a case study, as well as provides an explanation of the methods of data collection used. Finally, it explains the unique insights and challenges drawn from previous professional experience in post-conflict Côte d'Ivoire.

Côte d'Ivoire as A Case Study

The case of Côte d'Ivoire was chosen for several reasons. Despite a political conflict that spanned over 11 years, levels of violence and destruction were relatively low. Such a context, in which the majority of participants did not engage in armed combat, provides a compelling landscape to observe how wartime labels of ex-combatant are carried into the post-conflict state, and whether they carry the same utility for all rival groups. Moreover, since its independence, Côte d'Ivoire has a history of political mobilisation against the ruling regime of Félix Houphouët-Boigny, and has, consequently, established patterns in governance to appease such manifestations of discontent. While the political history of the country is discussed in Chapter 4, simply put, Côte d'Ivoire is an interesting case to assess whether pre-established political norms have influence on the post-conflict period. In this sense, the case of post-conflict Côte d'Ivoire is well suited to examine why some ex-combatants engage in political claims-making and others do not.

While the case of Côte d'Ivoire is intriguing in the ways explained above, it is also limited in its comparability to other recent violent conflicts in sub-Saharan Africa. Unlike Liberia and Sierra Leone, its regional neighbours, Côte d'Ivoire did not experience mass atrocities and humanitarian crises. This matters significantly when following the trajectories of ex-combatants in the post-conflict period. Similarly, it diverges from the recent conflicts in the Maghreb and Sahel, which have the added element of terrorist armed group presence and transnational fighters. Comparative analysis of political mobilisation and claims-making with the 'ex-combatant' label would make for

interesting 'most-different' case studies and could help identify this research applies to other cases beyond that of Côte d'Ivoire. That said, as previously mentioned, the case that resonates the most with that of Côte d'Ivoire is that of Zimbabwe- a liberation struggle. Despite both countries being different in the type of conflict experienced, with different types of opponents, and different time frames, claims-making was remarkably similar. Comparisons with the post-conflict political engagement of Zimbabwe's veterans aligned to the ruling ZANU-PF political party bear remarkable similarities to the ex-combatants of Côte d'Ivoire who have aligned themselves with the post-conflict regime of Alassane Ouattara and who have been the most active in claims-making. While work from Norma Kriger does not explicitly examine clientelistic ties, it has demonstrated the importance of loyalty to the ruling regime, the presence of political continuities across time, as well as the importance of history and politics in shaping post-conflict periods. This thesis, therefore, uses Kriger's findings as a starting point for comparison, to help focus its analysis and to examine whether or not there are larger trends across conflicts that can be identified.

Despite having many of the same pre-conditions as conflicts like Sierra Leone's or Liberia's, such as virulent rhetoric and a mass influx of weapons, levels of violence and atrocities remained relatively low and manifested themselves predominantly in the form of inter-community reprisal attacks.¹⁰⁹ From April 2011 onwards, Côte d'Ivoire, with guidance from the international community, successfully implemented a series of reforms and programmes to consolidate peace and security, and to promote national reconciliation. Together, these activities were aimed at mending the social, economic, and political cleavages created during the 11-year political crisis. The transition that preceded the post-electoral violence demonstrated by several positive indicators, including the successful completion of a Disarmament, Demobilisation, and Reintegration programme (DDR) and a Security Sector

¹⁰⁹ Mike McGovern, *Making war in Côte d'Ivoire* (London: The University of Chicago Press, 2011), 3.

Reform programme (SSR),¹¹⁰ stable economic growth recording 8.8% GDP growth in 2016,¹¹¹ returning investors,¹¹² and a series of free elections devoid of violence or intimidation.¹¹³

For many international observers, Côte d'Ivoire exhibited a model post-conflict trajectory in which peace and security have been re-established, encouraging foreign economic investment and large-scale infrastructure projects to follow suit.¹¹⁴ It has largely contained sporadic community reprisal attacks between ethnic groups, promoted an agenda of national reconciliation, and held peaceful presidential elections in 2015. Such a neatly crafted storyline, however, does not account for the multiple actors, desires, and grievances at play. The national benchmarks of post-conflict recovery, rather, gloss over these periods of temporary crisis-related contention, in which the perpetrators of instability have, for the most part, come from within the ruling regime's own support base. In November 2014, for example, reintegrated soldiers from the then *Forces Républicaines de Côte d'Ivoire* (FRCI), staged multiple protests across the country, demanding back-pay for services rendered during the crisis. Again, in January and May 2017, similar groups of soldiers carried out mutinies with similar demands. Alongside and in between these events, multiple protests and pleas have been made by individuals claiming ex-combatant status, demanding similar settlements. Such periods of contention, in which wartime labels have been leveraged to advance individual interests, have mostly been

¹¹⁰ "La Côte d'Ivoire, un exemple en matière de désarmement, démobilisation et réintégration," UN News Centre, June 20, 2017, <https://news.un.org/fr/story/2017/06/359582-la-cote-divoire-un-exemple-en-matiere-de-desarmement-demobilisation-et>.

¹¹¹ "Country Profile: Côte d'Ivoire," World Bank 2017, accessed July 5, 2017, <https://data.worldbank.org/country/cote-divoire?view=chart>.

¹¹² "Côte d'Ivoire Economic Outlook," African Development Bank, accessed July 5, 2017, <https://www.afdb.org/en/countries/west-africa/cote-d%E2%80%99ivoire/cote-divoire-economic-outlook/>.

¹¹³ Since 2011, Côte d'Ivoire held numerous municipal and legislative elections, including the Presidential elections of 2015 without any reported violence or threats.

¹¹⁴ Kim Yi Dionne and Abou Bamba, "Is Ivory Coast seeing a second economic 'miracle'?", *Washington Post*, accessed July 14 2017, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2017/07/14/is-ivory-coast-seeing-a-second-economic-miracle/>. During the 11-year political conflict, Côte d'Ivoire experienced relatively little destruction of infrastructure. Rather, economic investment and development were put on hold, as the country's fate remained uncertain for over a decade.

carried out by the perceived 'victors' of the crisis, with relatively fewer instances of contention from those with perceptions of defeat.¹¹⁵

Designed as a within-case comparison, focusing singularly on Côte d'Ivoire, this thesis makes comparisons between the political engagement initiatives of three general groups of ex-combatants: the Gbagbo supporter group, the FN supporter group, and the Commando Invisibles. Within the FN supporter group, two further comparisons are made between those who were integrated into the state armed forces and are in close proximity to individuals of influence, and those who were demobilised, officially or on their own, and who sit at the margins of ruling regime favour. By examining this political engagement across groups with different political affinities and proximity to state institutions, this thesis engages in a more nuanced exploration of ex-combatant political engagement in the post-conflict state and demonstrates that a broader understanding of ex-combatant political behaviour facilitates understanding of the broader trends in post-conflict governance.

This research stems from past professional experiences working in Côte d'Ivoire in support of the national Disarmament, Demobilisation, and Reintegration (DDR) programme, between 2014 and 2015. During this initial experience I observed diverging ex-combatant perceptions over for whom post-conflict benefits were intended. Initially understanding Ivorian ex-combatants as a single group, discussions with colleagues began to reveal that great divergence existed, not only in terms of perceptions of post-conflict opportunities, but also with regard to political affiliations. From these observations grew the current line of inquiry, seeking to understand the ways in which political engagement varied across groups, and whether the method of claims-making, in particular, had extended beyond communities of ex-combatants.

To answer the research questions, a total of 12 months of fieldwork were conducted in Côte d'Ivoire, in two stages. The first stage entailed a two-week

¹¹⁵ Author's observations from fieldwork conducted from August 2016 - July 2017.

scoping visit in February 2016 to re-establish past relationships, connect with former colleagues, and explore the viability of shifting from employment to a research role. The exploratory field visit was essential to re-establish contact with key stakeholders. During visits with friends and former colleagues, clear lines were drawn between the past employment and the nature of the doctoral research. Having worked in a highly political programme with implications on national security, it was important to be completely transparent with the motivations of the research, reassuring the stakeholders that its purpose was not to exploit any confidential knowledge or networks. Equally important was gaining a sense of how the security environment was changing with the many funding streams tied to post-conflict recovery soon to be cut. The consequences of the funding reduction, it was explained by Ivoirian professional contacts, would have direct implications on those who gained employment in these fields.

I commenced the second stage of in-depth fieldwork in August 2016 with six months of immersive qualitative data collection and an additional six months in-country of writing and collecting additional data to fill any identified gaps. Researching in a field so closely related to past professional experiences allowed for the use of appropriate local *argot* (slang) to both develop rapport and to quickly and accurately navigate the Ivoirian-specific post-conflict terrain. In this regard, this research benefits from the pre-established rapport and familiarity with Ivoirian culture, customs, norms, and social networks to more readily ease conversations into topics beyond the headlines of the crisis. In a context of two armed mutinies, much of the headline news led to difficulties accessing self-proclaimed ex-combatants, particularly for those who feared persecution for the mutinies of others. Establishing trust and rapport became essential to elicit answers from the respondents, who otherwise might have been hesitant to share their views and experiences.

This thesis draws from informal discussions with gatekeepers, semi-structured interviews with ex-combatants from the three groups, and international and local media coverage of select events of political engagement.

The majority of my analysis is based on observations from the economic capital city of Abidjan. This choice was made for both analytical and practical reasons. Analytically, Abidjan is the site of convergence for ex-combatants from all three armed groups considered in this research. While it is true that FN supporters' stronghold is typically in the northern city of Bouaké, the heart of the 2017 mutinies, and that Gbagbo supporters' stronghold is in the southwest around Gagnoa, Daloa, and Guiglo, both leadership and the majority of public displays of political engagement carried out by ex-combatants either occurred in Abidjan or were directed to the government officials based in Abidjan. Furthermore, despite the headquarters of the former northern rebellion being based in Bouaké, claims-making was always directed towards Abidjan. For the Gbagbo supporters, despite their strongholds being in the southwest of the country, their current political engagement is restricted to political party lines, with the headquarters and subsequent command of the Front Populaire Ivoirien located in Abidjan. For the Commando Invisibles, they are exclusively based out of Abidjan, which is also the site of their armed combat activity in 2010-2011. As such, Abidjan was the site of convergence for all three groupings of ex-combatants and was an ideal location to observe the interaction between ex-combatants and their target audience, the national government. The second reason that data collection was focused in Abidjan is in relation to the security climate. Breaches in national security, on account of the political engagement activities, resulted in restrictions in mobility for regular civilians and to essential purposes of commerce. For the events examined in this research that initially occurred outside of Abidjan, such as the 2017 mutinies, security concerns and restrictions prevented observing the events as they unfolded. In times of temporary instability due to the mutiny, protests, and other demonstrations, unnecessary movement was discouraged by both the national authorities and

consular offices. Abidjan remained the most secure location in the country, with an ample supply of competing local accounts of the events in the local media outlets. In case of heightened disorder, Abidjan also has an international airport. With sporadic outbreaks of protest and arrests, conducting interviews in Abidjan was the safest location. From Abidjan, ample security was provided to reinforce state institutions, and because of the typical road blockades that get erected during these events, was the surest location in case a swift exit was required.

Through focusing the data collection in Abidjan, this research collected data that was sufficient to indicate general trends in political engagement activities and the responses of the ruling regime. The trade-off, however, is that this research was not able to see some of the events of political engagement unfold in person. To have been present in Bouaké during the mutinies of 2017 would have allowed for a richer data collection in which greater numbers of mutineers and civilian voices could have been integrated into my analysis. The same goes for the Constitutional Amendment of October 2016. Although the Gbagbo supporters focused their political engagement activities in Abidjan in protest of the proposed reforms, a more complete understanding of Gbagbo supporter sentiments could have been captured from cities like Gagnoa, Daloa, Guiglo, and Duékoué, all strongholds of Gbagbo and his FPI political party. Inclusion of cities outside of Abidjan would also have revealed if there were any changes in perception beyond the large urban city, allowing more access to ex-combatants who remain in their villages. Abidjan, however, is a mixed group area for claims-making, and therefore, allowed access to all groups who targeted the post-conflict regime in the economic capital.

The second key source of data was local newspapers, international media coverage, and public billboards, complementing existing data about each act of public political engagement, as well as official state responses, when made public. The newspaper articles used in this research are those that were published in relation to the events of political engagement that this thesis examines. The articles were obtained either in hard copy or online. Acknowledging that the local newspapers are recognised by the majority of Ivoirians as being biased, a variety of newspapers representing competing

perspectives and political preferences were consulted. The newspapers consulted represented the main competing perspectives in the country: *Fraternite Matin* (Official Government), *Le Patriote* (RDR- Ouattara's political party), *Notre Voie* (Opposition-FPI political party), and *Abidjan.net* (online- flash news of events as they happen, closer to government). Local newspapers were used as indicators of political perspectives, collected across sources with diverging views. Newspaper articles sourced from international media outlets were particularly useful in monitoring how major events of claims-making were being framed, and more interestingly how local ex-combatants occasionally leveraged the international spotlight to extend their appeals to international audiences and national government for financial benefits.

Participant Selection and Methods

To answer my research questions, semi-structured interviews were conducted with ex-combatants across all three identified groups, as well as with international observers from embassies, international organisations, and local NGOs. The sampling method used during the semi-structured interviews derived primarily from selection across political affiliations, and then made use of the snowballing technique. For the selection, gatekeepers from each target group, Gbagbo supporters, FN supporters, and Commando Invisibles, each of which represent a different political affiliation, were engaged in discussions about the political trends of the day, as well as what they knew about claims-making and political engagement amongst the ex-combatants from their respective political affiliations. The three gatekeepers used in this research had previously worked with the national DDR programme, and in some cases, held family ties with the leadership of each political line. In their capacities as national DDR staff, they were tasked with liaising with their respective groups of ex-combatants to encourage participation in the programme. Of the three original gatekeepers, two were of Ivoirian descent and played coordination roles, for each side. One coordinated pro-Gbagbo militia groups in Abidjan as well as holding familial ties with Laurent Gbagbo, and the other coordinated

groups of *Jeunes Associés*¹¹⁶ (FN supporters) and had allegedly worked within the northern rebellion from its most nascent stages. The third gatekeeper was an international professional who maintained amiable connection to the Commando Invisibles group, a group that was, and, remains to this day, virtually inaccessible to the general public on account of their choice of remaining politically and socially disengage from Ivoirian society since returning from exile in 2015. Together, the gatekeepers facilitated access to groups that might otherwise have been difficult, as well as provided useful insights into cultural norms and expectations when engaging in this type of subject matter. Through the discussions with gatekeepers, the identification of which recent attempts of claims-making held political significance, allowed for a more localised framework around the interviews with ex-combatants that followed.

Following these initial interviews with ex-combatants, upon my request, participants usually agreed to extend contact and the inquiry to fellow ex-combatants who were also willing to discuss how they perceived their place in the post-conflict period. The risk of relying on personal networks and affiliations, however, was that of homophily. This had the potential to create a situation in which, in the Ivoirian ex-combatant context, might mean collecting data from contacts with similar views and experiences. As such, introductions to new participants may have been made with a view of reinforcing the opinions already presented, rather than identifying divergent experiences and opinions. To mitigate these risks of selection bias and homophily in social networks,¹¹⁷ any points of contention within each of the broad categories of FN supporters, Gbagbo supporters, and Commando Invisibles were recorded, and then filled with targeted interviews from individuals possibly overlooked. The interview data used in this thesis comes from ex-combatants from both the Sangaré and Affi N'Guessan political divide within the broad category of Gbagbo supporters,

¹¹⁶ The sub-group of *Jeunes Associés* is discussed in detail in Chapter 7 on FN Demobilised ex-combatants.

¹¹⁷ Karen Jacobsen and Loren B. Landau, "The Dual Imperative in Refugee Research: Some Methodological and Ethical Considerations in Social Science Research on Forced Migration," *Disasters* 27, no. 3 (2003): 185-206.

as well as from the pro-IB and pro-Soro factions within the FN, as elaborated in Chapters 6,7 and 8 of this thesis.¹¹⁸

Over the course of the first six months, I conducted 58 individual interviews, five group interviews, and held numerous informal discussions, with self-identifying ex-combatants, and 18 local and international observers from embassies, the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire peacekeeping mission (UNOCI), NGOs, professors, and government employees. The interviews generally lasted between 45-60 minutes and were conducted either on an individual basis or in groups of four to five, according to the preference of the respondents themselves. It was observed how those with feelings of defeat, the Commando Invisibles and the Gbagbo supporters, gravitated towards group interviews. Those most proactive in claims-making, largely representative of the FN supporting group, rarely showed hesitation about individual interviews, often bringing their own supporting documents to present as proof of their attempts to engage the regime in a discussion about possible compensation. Additionally, numerous informal discussions were held with taxi drivers and at local maquis,¹¹⁹ to gain a more holistic understanding of how ex-combatant political engagement was seen more broadly. Semi-structured interviews were useful in ascertaining the participants' own perceptions of an experience related to the topic at hand.¹²⁰ Providing a rough structure for the interviews allowed me to keep discussions within the general area of interest, all the while also increasing opportunities for the ex-combatants to raise any issues or trends that they deemed important that might have been overlooked. Following each interview, participants were informed that they could always review or retract their comments should they desire. While the participants accepted in a reassured manner, none of them took the offer up. Subsequent

¹¹⁸ To be elaborated in Chapters 2 and 4, describing the divide within the FN leadership, dividing fighters from the pro-IB and pro-Soro camps. Pro-IB eventually became the Commando Invisibles, and pro-Soro eventually formed the majority of ex-combatants who are examined in Chapters 4 and 5 as a broad category of FN supporters.

¹¹⁹ Maquis are open-air roadside restaurants and bars, highly frequented by Ivoirians after working hours and on weekends.

¹²⁰ Michele J. McIntosh and Janice M. Morse, "Situating and Constructing Diversity in Semi-Structured Interviews," *Global Qualitative Nursing Research* 2 (2015): 1.

follow-up discussions were also held on a needs-be basis. The majority of interviews were conducted in public locations, designated by the respondents themselves. In some cases, this meant at maquis or in their respective offices, if they had them.

One of the challenges experienced when conducting interviews was in regard to inconsistent answers by the same respondent to the same questions. This challenge sheds light on what I believe to be crucial to understanding research during times of post-conflict transitions: that of reduced employment opportunities and lay-offs in post-conflict-related sectors. In this regard, job insecurity and its manifestations within the personal lives of the participants sometimes influenced the responses obtained. The immediate post-conflict environment of Côte d'Ivoire saw the influx of international programmes and funding for post-conflict recovery. In such contexts, employment opportunities were created, granting many Ivoirians the opportunity to earn a stable income and develop skills in development and security work. With the gradual drawdown of these programmes, however, many lost their employment and their stable salaries. While navigating an environment such as this, it was important to constantly assess the motivations behind certain statements offered by the respondents who had been employed. It was observed that for many of the respondents who were in the final months of their contracts, answers to questions sometimes fluctuated depending on their own prospective employment opportunities. The fluctuating answers were a reminder of the subjective nature of this research, where the respondents' moods, perspectives, answers, and general interpretations of reality were, at least to a certain degree, contingent on unstable circumstances. In these cases, further light-hearted discussion was required to eventually unearth their opinions apart from the stressor of the day.

An additional challenge was in relation to my limited financial capacity and inability to consistently meet my respondents in neighbourhoods of their choice. During the first six months of fieldwork, my financial means were exceptionally low. By way of offsetting costs for transportation, I sometimes requested that the gatekeepers, with whom I built rapport with prior to doctoral

fieldwork and were comfortably familiar with, come to me. This decision, however, came with significant risk. One of the gatekeepers facilitating access to the FN supporting group, was also involved in weapons collections for the government and had a local reputation of occasionally financially defaulting on his commitments. As partial reassurance to myself, I maintained amiable relations with the appropriate armed forces authorities, one of which the FN gatekeeper was trying to gain employment from. Further complicating the matter was the eventuality of the FN gatekeeper not gaining employment, at which point he started to suggest that he be paid for his assistance in contacting ex-combatants. Furthermore, he began to discredit the other gatekeepers and respondents, signalling to me that he knew who the other respondents were. In response, I reminded him about the anonymity of the research project, refrained from commenting on his personal attacks against other respondents, and explained clearly and firmly that no monetary compensation would be provided through this work. I also made an effort to gradually phase out my dependence on the FN gatekeeper. Of vital importance when conducting research into themes of high risk, such as ex-combatant networks, it is vital to have a clear understanding of the power dynamics on the ground and to triangulate information on who each respondent is, what their reputation is, and what activities they may be linked to. To allow such respondents into a researcher's private residence requires a fairly intimate understanding of the dynamics of local power brokers. Had I not previously been exposed to these networks in a professional manner, and had I not benefitted from the cover of the appropriate armed forces authorities, the risks of working with such individuals likely would have outweighed the benefits.

Of equal importance, is an explanation of how access was gained to the Commando Invisibles group, a group where original members are deliberately maintaining a low profile due to their fears of persecution from the regime. Adding complexity to the issue of access is that of identification as there are numerous ex-combatants who sit on the fringes of influential circles and who have tried to appropriate the name of the Commando Invisibles in order to benefit from post-conflict pay-outs. To start, the Commando Invisibles was

much smaller in comparison to the other two groups, with a narrow operational theatre restricted to one particular neighbourhood in Abidjan, that of Abobo. Moreover, much of this group's power and security came from their deliberate "invisibility", making their identification a difficult task beyond a few leaders with a public profile. Identification of respondents from the Commando Invisibles group, therefore, was derived exclusively from one gatekeeper, and was limited in the amount of participants interviewed. All interviews were conducted in accordance to the preferences of the leader, in the presence of four to five of his closest fighters. Although these interviews could not be recorded, the leader permitted hand-written notes of what was being discussed. Gatekeeper confirmation, along with past professional experience interacting with this group, was vital to elicit participation from the original members, as well as to decipher which claims of Commando Invisibles identity were plausible and which were not. In Chapter 8, specific to the political engagement of the Commando Invisibles, narratives from the original members are presented alongside those with alternative accounts. For the majority of interviews used in this thesis, information was triangulated by cross-checking narratives between respondents, through discussions with international observers, and through local and international media accounts.

The interviews conducted for this research used either a recording device or hand-written notes. For interviews conducted with a voice recorder, transcriptions were written verbatim in French in an effort to preserve the original messages. For those that relied on hand-written notes, the field notes were digitized as soon as possible and occasionally complemented with additional observations when notable. As Côte d'Ivoire uses French as its official language, all interviews with Ivoirians were conducted in French. Complementary interviews, usually with members of the diplomatic community and international organisations were conducted in English. The data presented in this thesis, when collected in French, was translated by myself.

Ethical Considerations

The research for this thesis was carried out in accordance with the University of Edinburgh's ethical review standards. During all discussions with gatekeepers, as well as with interviews with ex-combatants and complementary sources, discussions were initiated by first making small talk and then introducing myself, the research, and why they were being approached. From the onset, deliberate measures were taken to clarify that this research was conducted independent from any organisation of political group and was for the purposes of personal doctoral study. From there, the area of study was introduced and a brief explanation of the types of questions to be asked was provided. Participants were consistently informed that any of the information they provided was voluntary and could be retracted at any time. Upon sensing that they understood the objectives and terms of their participation, verbal consent was then obtained.

Verbal informed consent was preferred as many of the respondents were illiterate, including some higher-profile individuals who participated in this research. Following the end of the political conflict in 2011, many ex-combatants were absorbed into the formal state apparatus, of which the majority gained employment in the armed forces. Amongst some of the highest-ranking ex-combatants to be absorbed into elite positions, levels of literacy are variable. This observation held true for many other ex-combatants interviewed, particularly those most heavily engaged in claims-making, the FN supporters. The use of verbal consent across all interviews ensured that no participants felt marginalised and that the data collection remained consistent. Verbal consent also helped set the mood for relaxed discussions, which was crucial with the potentially sensitive nature of the topic.

Challenges and Reflexivity

One of the most pervasive challenges in carrying out this research was the challenge of spoken and unspoken expectations from the respondents and the pressure that puts on the research relationship. This challenge was particularly present with certain groups of FN supporters, who anticipated facilitated access to resources and opportunities for their participation. While working with these groups, respondents would finish interviews requesting that I utilise my perceived ties to government officials, UN leadership, and military officers to help them find employment, or at the very least, to lobby on their behalf.¹²¹ To mitigate these challenges, I reinforced my position as a neutral researcher, carrying out research for my own doctoral study. In most cases, this explanation sufficed, while in a minority, additional details of my separation from the UN and the nature of my doctoral programme were necessary.

The second challenge involved my past employment with the UN peacekeeping mission in Côte d'Ivoire, and the political bias that it is perceived to have had amongst many Ivoirians. Allegations of the UN mission's political bias in support of Ouattara and his FRCI were predominant in discussions with supporters of both the PDCI and, even more so, amongst supporters of the FPI. For many of these respondents, the FN rebellion benefitted from intervention from both France during the 2011 capture of Gbagbo and from a passive support from the UN mission to 'clean-up' the political opposition. Even amongst Ivoirians employed by the mission, political frustrations were echoed across many informal discussions, with many seeing their employment as a stable income at the expense of their political preferences. This passive hostility to the UN mission meant that respondents from either the PDCI or the FPI almost always responded with caution or hostility at the beginning of our interactions. Through our discussions, however, after seeing that their opinions and criticisms would be included without bias, conversation flowed more naturally, and respondents opened up about broader themes not captured in

¹²¹ Note: interviews with groups from the Gbagbo supporters and the Commando Invisibles did not interpret the interactions as such. They are also significantly less involved in claims-making.

this thesis such as France's presence in the country and the roles of the international community, and in particular, the ICC. While much of the interview data on these broader themes is not presented in this thesis, it did significantly shape my analysis that political tensions remain strong in the post-conflict period, that loyalties to past political patrons remain in-tact, and that individuals are placing high hopes of the elections of 2020 to truly determine the political outcome of the 11-year crisis.

The third challenge involves local security tensions and respondent willingness to participate in the research. While Côte d'Ivoire's security situation remained relatively stable during the period of fieldwork, a few events occurred that pitted sub-groups of Ivoirians against state security forces. One such event was the Compagnie Ivoirienne d'électricité (CEI) protests in Bouaké on the 22nd of July 2016, in which military and police reinforcements were sent to quell protests about rising electricity costs. The confrontation, which is speculated to have significant ex-combatant infiltration, resulted in one death, tens of injured, and between 44-50 arrests in association with accounts of pillaging and theft.¹²² Other events, such as the demonstrations leading into the 30th of October 2016 Referendum and the January 2017 mutiny, were met with a similar level of state reaction. While authorities were more careful about possible deaths and injuries, arrests continued to be made without clear or justifiable reason to many of those demonstrating. The seemingly arbitrary arrests had a particular impact on respondents who considered themselves as the politically defeated, who mused about fearing for their own persecution regardless of whether they had participated in the unrest of the day. In a handful of cases, state investigations into these events made several respondents reluctant to participate in the interviews, especially amongst those self-identified as Gbagbo supporters and members of the Commando Invisibles.

¹²² "Côte d'Ivoire: un mort dans une manifestation contre la hausse de l'électricité," Radio France Internationale, July 22, 2016, <http://www.rfi.fr/afrique/20160722-cote-ivoire-mort-manifestation-bouake-electricite>; for public responses to the arrests, see "Côte d'Ivoire: Bouaké toujours 'chaud', nouvelle manifestation devant un camp militaire pour la libération des interpellés," Koaci, July 25, 2016, <http://koaci.com/cote-divoire-bouake-toujours-chaud-nouvelle-manifestation-devant-camp-militaire-pour-liberation-interpelles-100540.html>.

The fluid security situation in the country during fieldwork underscored how post-conflict contexts could be dynamic and volatile, quickly affecting what topics Ivoirians were comfortable discussing. During the periods of heightened suspicion, I chose to wait a few weeks before conducting interviews. I also refrained from contacting my best-placed informants, as I did not want to be seen meddling into issues of state security and potential suspects. The mutinies of January and May 2017 were particularly problematic for engaging participants to discuss the events, as widespread fear of persecution ensued thereafter. During these times, the gatekeepers were vital in securing access, although, they too, spoke of heightened vigilance and difficulty reaching the target communities.

Conclusion

This chapter provided an overview of the methodological choices of this research. As stated above, post-conflict Côte d'Ivoire provides a unique landscape to examine how labels of ex-combatant are used in the post-conflict period. More importantly, the methods of data collection used while conducting fieldwork for this topic are arguably the most suitable for the particular time period and topic at hand. The data collected, and subsequently presented in Chapters 5, 6, 7, and 8 respond to the primary interest of this thesis, that is understanding why some ex-combatants mobilise to make financial and material claims, and others do not.

Chapter 4: Post-Independence Governance and the Making of Post-Conflict Opportunities

Introduction

If political affinities and proximity to influential political actors shape the political behaviours of ex-combatants in post-conflict Côte d'Ivoire, then it is essential to examine if there is precedence. This chapter sets out to do just that, tracing the historical practices of governance and the ways that they influence political behaviour in the post-conflict period. Since 2011, the post-conflict financial opportunities for those who supported Ouattara and the FN rebellion, the victors, and unfavourable treatment for those who supported Gbagbo and Ibrahim Coulibaly ("IB"), the politically unaligned, reflect what ex-combatants in this study have come to see as the continuation of 'politics as usual'. To better understand this point of view, this chapter examines the historical practices of governance since independence in 1960, demonstrating how the acquisition of land, as well as lucrative posts in the public, private, and military service, were used as resources of redistribution in the post-independence period. It also demonstrates precedence for expectations of salaried posts and pay-outs for those who consider themselves to belong to the victor's camps. These practices not only show that Côte d'Ivoire has a record of clientelistic governance that rarely resulted in a balanced distribution of resources across political affinities, but that expectations based on the past continue to influence the behaviour of ex-combatants and their choices of political engagement in the post-conflict period. This chapter draws from literature on Ivoirian post-independence governance, patron-client relations in the Ivoirian state, and recent accounts of the 11-year political crisis. Interview data from Ivoirian respondents is used to complement accounts of the 11-year crisis, offering useful insights into local interpretations of post-independence governance.

Adding to the post-independence review, this chapter also outlines the key events of the 11-year political crisis from the coup of December 1999 to the fall of Laurent Gbagbo in April 2011. The second section of this chapter documents what is publicly known about the key events and actors, revealing the enduring presence of unconfirmed facts around each event. This review exposes the gaps within competing narratives of the crisis, which have consequently opened windows of opportunity for new groups of local actors to make claims for financial rewards. By providing murky details of commonly cited wartime stories, individuals on the fringes of the conflict attempted to secure personal benefits. By presenting an overview of the competing narratives for the most frequently recounted events of the crisis, this section lays the foundation for Chapter 8 (Commando Invisibles), where data demonstrates that some individuals with little ties to the conflict have exploited unconfirmed narratives of the crisis to make similar claims to FN supporters. Together, these points demonstrate how political instability in the post-conflict period has developed, with ex-combatants from the victor's engaging in more disruptive claims-making behaviour than those considered to be defeated. This chapter sets the foundation to understand the lasting legacies of post-independence governance in post-conflict periods and adds the necessary background understanding of the different political affinities that can be observed in post-conflict Côte d'Ivoire.

Post-Independence Governance and Discontent

The discontent and division that characterised the 11-year Ivoirian crisis have been examined from several angles, including the politicisation of citizenship,¹²³ ethnic dynamics,¹²⁴ land grievances,¹²⁵ religious and mystical

¹²³ Abu Bakarr Bah, "Democracy and civil war: Citizenship and peacemaking in Côte d'Ivoire," *African Affairs* 109, no. 437 (2010): 597.

¹²⁴ Jean-Pierre Dozon, *Les clefs de la crise ivoirienne* (Paris : Karthala, 2011).

¹²⁵ Catherine Boone, "Electoral Populism where property rights are weak: Land politics in contemporary sub-Saharan Africa," *Comparative Politics* 41, no. 2 (2009): 1183-201.

dynamics,¹²⁶ and the intersection of history, indigenous claims, politics of insurgent youth, and economic factors.¹²⁷ Drawing on these accounts, this section provides an overview of the grievances that led to the political polarisation of the crisis, where the primarily southern-based supporters of Gbagbo were pitted against those of northern descent. As with any conflict, the pre-conditions that led to the crisis in Côte d'Ivoire are complex and multi-faceted. Nevertheless, for the purposes of this chapter, the history of migration and land tenure are prioritised, as they were the grievances most frequently vocalised by Ivoirian participants in this research. Many of the political affinities that were forged leading into the conflict continue to define political alliances in the post-conflict period and subsequently impact the choices of ex-combatant political engagement.

Economically Promising Lands and Mass Migration

Since 1893, when Côte d'Ivoire was declared a French colony, economic activities were centred on the production of export products such as palm oil, cocoa, and coffee in the fertile lands of southwest. In the 1920-30s, resistance to French exploitation of these lands manifested itself amongst groups indigenous to the southwest, the most significant discontent being with the Kruan-speaking groups.¹²⁸ Due in part to the clashes with the Kruan-speakers, as well as other indigenous groups, the French colonists decided to shift their reliance on labour from southwest populations to those dominating the north of Côte d'Ivoire. Ivoirians of northern descent typically included ethnicities from the Mande and Voltaic-speaking groups, who inhabited and migrated between

¹²⁶ Marie Miran-Guyon, *Guerres mystique en Côte d'Ivoire*, (Paris: Karthala, 2015).

¹²⁷ Mike McGovern, *Making war in Côte d'Ivoire*, (Chicago, London: The University of Chicago Press, 2011).

¹²⁸ In this thesis, the term indigenous is used and follows James Anaya's definition "living descendants of pre-invasion inhabitants of lands now dominated by others. They are culturally distinct groups that find themselves engulfed by other settler societies born of empire and conquest". See James Anaya, *Indigenous Peoples in International Law (Second Edition)* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 3. The term "indigenous" is also the closest translation to Ivoirian uses of "autochtone".

the Ivoirian territory and Guinea, Mali, and Burkina Faso.¹²⁹ The shift in labour, however, was not without complications. To secure enough labourers to meet their production needs in the southwest, the French facilitated the movement of northern labourers south. To do so, a series of policies were enforced, including the 1933-1947 Upper-Volta territorial fusion that combined what is now Burkina Faso with Côte d'Ivoire.¹³⁰ Alongside this, the French encouraged the relocation of local elites from Akan groups, such as the Agni, to the most fertile lands. Following their relocation, Agni settlers were treated as official chiefs who then hired labour from their plantation earnings. Upon relocation, these elites formed a core segment of the local bourgeoisie. The mass immigration of what eventually became locally known as “*northerners/Dioulas/allogenes*” into the southwest to take part in the plantations meant that more people were looking to make a livelihood from the same resources, and that newcomers, in particular, were seeking to acquire land for their own economic activities. Upon arrival in the southwest, migrants were authorised to work the land for their own use, often in exchange for providing labour services or gifts to the indigenous populations who retained a sense of moral authority over the land.¹³¹ Despite the varying degrees of moral authority retained by the traditional authorities, indigenous systems of governance began to be sidestepped in favour of economic prosperity. As a result of these migrations, and the favouring of those who pursued economic activities in line with the French plantation strategies, traditional authorities indigenous to the plantation areas were weakened. Their traditional forms of governance ran in tandem with those “arranged in terms of income, education, and political influence.”¹³²

¹²⁹ David A. Chappell, “The Nation as Frontier: Ethnicity and Clientelism in Ivoirian History,” *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 22, no. 4 (1989): 676; Robert Mundt, *African Historical Dictionaries no. 41: Historical Dictionary of the Ivory Coast (Côte d'Ivoire)* (Metuchen, N.J, London: Scarecrow, 1987), xv.

¹³⁰ Mundt, *Historical Dictionary of the Ivory Coast (Côte d'Ivoire)*, 9.

¹³¹ Catherine Boone, *Political Topographies of the African State: Territorial Authority and Institutional Choice*, *Cambridge Studies in Comparative Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 188.

¹³² Boone, *Political Topographies of the African State*, 186.

The tensions originating from issues of land tenure built the foundation for the grievances that would erupt decades later.¹³³ Although not particularly contentious in the beginning, over time migrant populations were perceived to increasingly sidestep the customary laws of land tenure and interpersonal relations began to weaken. As described by Catherine Boone, the Dida communities of the southwest provide an example of weakened relations between the migrant and host communities.

The first migrant workers were incorporated into the households as “adopted relatives”, but outsiders quickly established land-use rights, and less personalized relations between the *indigènes*¹³⁴ and the outsiders became the norm.¹³⁵

As a result, Boone points out that generational shifts began to emerge, changing social relations between host communities and new arrivals.

Boone’s observation of generational shifts resurfaced in this thesis’ interviews with Ivoirians indigenous to the southwest. Describing how tensions built between indigenous populations and migrant workers, an Ivoirian professor with Dida ancestry explained remarkably similar patterns to those identified by Boone. When speaking about his home community and the ways in which migrant-indigenous relations changed over time, the professor stated the following.

In the beginning, there were close relations between the workers and the indigenous. From the second and third generations, however, relations became less close. They brought their families to settle. Consequently, the new arrivals no longer needed to nurture the relations with the indigenous communities because they depended on their families.¹³⁶

The new demands placed on the land, combined with the increasing presence of migrant populations with increasingly distant social connections, aggravated inter-ethnic relations and laid the foundation for subsequent clashes,

¹³³ Ruth Marshall-Fratani, “The War of ‘Who Is Who’: Autochthony, Nationalism, and Citizenship in the Ivoirian Crisis,” *African Studies Review* 49, no. 2 (2006): 15.

¹³⁴ Ivoirian colloquial term that implies “indigenous”.

¹³⁵ Boone, *Political Topographies of the African State*, 188.

¹³⁶ Ivoirian Professor, interview by author in Abidjan- II Plateaux, October 5, 2016, in-person.

accusations of state-led favouritism, and the delicate balance of clientelistic practices as a form of governance.

Post-colonial Côte d'Ivoire, while notorious for its clientelistic exchanges, managed to challenge the negative stigma of patrimonialism for over 20 years. The combination of strong personal rule and regulated redistribution were thought to contribute to its political stability and economic growth.¹³⁷ For observers of Côte d'Ivoire during the height of its post-colonial success, stability was attributed to multiple factors: a strong charismatic leader; an all-encompassing single political party—the *Partie Démocratique de Côte D'Ivoire* (PDCI), that successfully absorbed rather than mobilised political resistance; an institutionalized state structure; a growing economy that facilitated payoffs to the politically active; and the presence of regional blocks of cooperation that limited possible destabilisation from forces beyond Côte d'Ivoire's immediate borders.¹³⁸ Côte d'Ivoire, under Félix Houphouët-Boigny, became a state in which the redistribution of goods was regulated by a strong central authority through formalised and ethnically inclusive channels. Thus, the combination of Houphouët-Boigny's strong personal power with bureaucratic state institutions, resulted in a sort of hybrid-system in which "the imprint of neopatrimonialism was capped and ring-fenced" by the strong bureaucratic institutions that performed the routine functions of government.¹³⁹

To more clearly understand how practices of regulated patron-client relations were applied, the practice of ethno-regional balancing within government institutions must first be explained more fully. In a country with over 60 ethnic groups, Houphouët-Boigny recognised that ethnic tensions were a possible source of political instability. The response, in terms of governance, involved both political elite and local political dynamics. Houphouët-Boigny is known to have hand-selected individuals for elite government positions, as well as for creating systems of political distribution that reflected the ethnic diversity

¹³⁷ Richard C. Crook, "Patrimonialism, Administrative Effectiveness, and Economic Development in Côte d'Ivoire," *African Affairs* 88, no. 351 (1989): 206.

¹³⁸ William Zartman and Christopher Delgado, *The Political Economy of Ivory Coast* (Praeger: New York, 1984), 3.

¹³⁹ Bach, "Patrimonialism and Neopatrimonialism," 278.

of the country. For appointments of the political elite, Houphouët-Boigny maintained an ethno-regional balance working with select individuals for the co-optation and redistribution of economic incentives and state resources.¹⁴⁰ Elites were rewarded for their abilities to maintain contact and hold control over their respective ethnic constituencies, so long as their actions did not fuel ethnic contestation of the PDCI.¹⁴¹ Analysts noted how the elites that were hand-selected by Houphouët-Boigny demonstrated significant cohesion due to their obligations to honour the commitments set from the top-down.¹⁴² At the local levels, Houphouët-Boigny allowed for PDCI party lists to be developed within each jurisdiction. The autonomy granted to the jurisdictions, albeit in a state-defined way, ensured a rough ethnic balance by reflecting the local ethnic demographics, and, in most cases, compelled local jurisdictions to remain loyal to the PDCI.¹⁴³ Under his rule, both formal and informal systems of reciprocity and centre-periphery linkages emerged, allowing for stable ethnic representation and the development of other forms of representative political formations such as associations and workers unions.¹⁴⁴ With all of these factors taken together—that is, the deliberate diversity applied to elite-level appointments, combined with the PDCI-controlled ‘autonomous’ party lists — Houphouët-Boigny ensured that one ethnic group was not over-represented vis-à-vis the others. Moreover, in addition to mitigating the risk of political instability, this regulated form of patrimonial governance, specifically the selection of elites, was also useful in preventing the rise of ethnic barons who

¹⁴⁰ Jean-Francois Médard, “L’Afrique est partie! Du désordre comme instrument politique by Patrick Chabel and Jean-Pascal Daloz,” *Revue Française de Science Politique* 50, no. 4/5 (2000): 854; Bach, “Patrimonialism and Neopatrimonialism,” 277.

¹⁴¹ Dwayne Woods, “Elites, and ‘Home Town’ Associations in Côte d’Ivoire: An Historical Analysis of State, Society, Links,” *Journal of International African Institute* 64, no. 4 (1994): 469.

¹⁴² Crook, “Patrimonialism, Administrative Effectiveness, and Economic Development,” 205; Bach, “Patrimonialism and Neopatrimonialism,” 278.

¹⁴³ Crook, “Patrimonialism, Administrative Effectiveness, and Economic Development,” 213.

¹⁴⁴ Woods, “Elites, and ‘Home Town’ Associations in Côte d’Ivoire,” 465-466. The associations that initially developed were later challenged by Houphouët-Boigny, who considered that they began to challenge his party’s authority. The tradition of association-forming is discussed in Chapter 7 through a comparison with post-conflict ex-combatant associations.

could potentially mobilise ethnic groups who might have felt their needs were being side-lined.¹⁴⁵ As reinforced by Boone,

Houphouët built a ruthlessly centralized and highly concentrated party-state that gave rural interests few sites of access to the state and state power, and few sites that would be political entrepreneurs [“barons”] at the local level could use as scaffolding to advance their own political ambitions and/or the interests of rural Ivoirians.¹⁴⁶

Those granted power by the regime, were encouraged to invest in home communities, all the while working to maintain their positions and favour from Houphouët-Boigny. In this sense, the selected elites were dependent on the power granted to them from Houphouët-Boigny, and, therefore, maintained loyalty to the regime. This form of exchange differs from situations in which local elites are then co-opted by the state and may eventually, with enough resources and political know-how, vie for political power of their own. Nevertheless, despite the careful attention devoted to ethnic representation at the national level, not all resources were distributed in a manner perceived as fair across all ethnic groups. Over time, the distribution of resources outlined below ultimately aggravated inter-ethnic tensions and created widely held perceptions of unfair benefits for those with connections inside Houphouët-Boigny’s government, and more importantly, for those who continued to offer political support in the face of challenged popularity.

Resources for Redistribution: Land and Office

As explained above, Houphouët-Boigny and the PDCI party governed in a highly centralized way and held tight control over state resources, all the while reinforcing the decentralized and egalitarian societal structures of the Ivoirian south. For rural areas in the south, Houphouët-Boigny implemented a strategy of “administrative occupation”. Administrative occupation, implemented by the regime in its purest form, involved the following: politics and state spending

¹⁴⁵ Crook, “Patrimonialism, Administrative Effectiveness, and Economic Development,” 213.

¹⁴⁶ Boone, *Political Topographies of the African State*, 208.

were avoided in rural areas; political organisations were discouraged at local levels; and commodity-buying activities for the plantations were left in private hands with little state intervention.¹⁴⁷ As such, little room was left for political mobilisation or for the acquisition of political resources without a certain degree of state co-optation. Access to state resources was limited, and when occurring, took place within the political context enforced and promoted by Houphouët-Boigny and the PDCI.¹⁴⁸ As elaborated by Catherine Boone,

Houphouët wanted to ensure that his regime did not bequeath to a decentralized and relatively egalitarian rural society the very political (institutional) resources that farmers would need to organize themselves politically to advance claims and complaints on the center.”¹⁴⁹

Restricted and top-down defined access to state resources in the post-independence period has arguably shaped local expectations of resource distribution in the post-conflict state, particularly amongst groups of ex-combatants.

During the first two decades of independence, Côte d'Ivoire experienced rapid economic growth, driven in large part by its production of cocoa and coffee, and its reliance of foreign capital and expertise in key industries.¹⁵⁰ During the 1960s, deliberate measures were taken to expand the primary agricultural exports of cocoa, all the while encouraging the diversification of the sector into other commodities such as palm oil, cotton, rubber, and fruit. In addition to the revenues generated from the primary agricultural exports, economic growth was supported by a series of investment incentives designed to attract foreign capital, namely in the import-substitution manufacturing sector or the agro-productive processes.¹⁵¹ In tandem with the expansion, parastatal

¹⁴⁷ Boone, *Political Topographies of the African State*, 142; Boone uses this categorisation for governance in the south of Côte d'Ivoire, while recognising that governance in the north followed a different strategy. In the Korhogo region, the northern region of Boone's comparison, governance involved power-sharing with local elites and was more interventionist.

¹⁴⁸ Woods, "Elites, and 'Home Town' Associations in Côte d'Ivoire," 469.

¹⁴⁹ Boone, *Political Topographies of the African State*, 143.

¹⁵⁰ Abou Bamba, *African Miracle, African Mirage: Transnational Politics and the Paradox of Modernization in Ivory Coast* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2016), 181.

¹⁵¹ Crook, "Patrimonialism, Administrative Effectiveness, and Economic Development," 207.

companies became notorious for their lucrative benefits, as did the expansion of industries jointly financed by the state and private investors. During this era, it was also common for members of the political elite to be appointed to these lucrative positions, creating a nation-wide perception of facilitated appointment for those who were already considered to be on the 'inside track'.¹⁵²

Alongside the distribution of these posts, land became increasingly used as a resource of patronage, reinforcing its centrality in the inter-communal tensions already present. In 1963, Côte d'Ivoire's *Code Domaniale*, stated that all land that was not declared under a formal title would become land of 'national domain'. As a result, indigenous land claims were mostly upheld when it was politically pragmatic to do so.¹⁵³ This practice, in which Houphouët-Boigny famously stated that "the land belongs to the person who makes it productive" ("*la terre appartient à celui qui la met en valeur*"), granted the state the ability to distribute land accordingly, once again sidestepping indigenous systems of land tenure. These policies, although appealing to the growing migrant population, fuelled tensions between indigenous and migrant populations who seemed to be welcomed unconditionally by the PDCI.

Further adding to indigenous grievances of land as a resource of patronage, was the extension of electoral voting rights to non-Ivoirian citizens. In the one-party elections of the 1980s, migrant populations inhabiting the southwest were given voting cards, inevitably casting their ballots for the same ruling party that granted them access to the land and now gave electoral voting rights.¹⁵⁴ Coupled with the facilitated access to land for migrant populations, the extension of voting rights was largely seen as a tactic of Houphouët-Boigny to maintain the control of his political party over the course of multiple presidential elections.¹⁵⁵ The tension attributed to the expansion of civic participation rights is complemented by the research of Catherine Boone (2009), where she

¹⁵² Crook, "Patrimonialism, Administrative Effectiveness, and Economic Development," 214.

¹⁵³ Boone, "Electoral Populism where property rights are weak," 189.

¹⁵⁴ Catherine Boone and Norma Kriger, "Multiparty Elections and Land Patronage: Zimbabwe and Côte d'Ivoire," *Commonwealth and Comparative Politics* 48, no. 2 (2010): 187.

¹⁵⁵ Christian Bouquet, *Géopolitique de la Côte d'Ivoire: Le désespoir de Kourouma, 2nd Edition Collection Perspectives Géopolitiques* (Paris: Armand Colin, 2008), 22.

demonstrates how promises of land increasingly featured in electoral campaigns as an attempt to mobilise constituencies to the disadvantage of their rivals and of other minorities.¹⁵⁶ As Houphouët-Boigny himself was Baoulé, an ethnic group found mostly in the central parts of Côte d'Ivoire and known to have greatly prospered from the cultivation of southern lands, practices such as these fed into perceptions of opportunities for the 'in-group' at the expense of all others, particularly the indigenous southwest populations.

The use of land as a resource for redistribution during times of electoral mobilisation, however, is not exclusive to Côte d'Ivoire. Combining their observations from both Côte d'Ivoire and Zimbabwe, Norma Kriger and Catherine Boone identified a series of pre-conditions necessary for land to become a viable resource to mobilise support. First, there had to be weak legal restraints around land rights, allowing rulers to allocate land as they desired. Second, was the presence of multiparty elections, in which the electorate had to have multiple options beyond the ruling party. Finally, the redistribution of land as a resource of patronage is also linked to a dwindling fiscal state capacity. When other state coffers run low, land may be one of the final resources that can be offered.¹⁵⁷ In line with the observations of Kriger and Boone, the issue of land and its redistribution for electoral support is a theme that re-emerged in Côte d'Ivoire. Under the successive regimes of Bédié, Guéï, and Gbagbo, each leader made promises in one way or another, to transfer land from those deemed to be in opposition, be it "foreigners", regional migrants, immigrants, or minorities, and give it back to their supporters and loyal patriots.¹⁵⁸ The redistribution of land seemingly for political support, this thesis argues, sets up expectations of governance and redistribution that award political supporters. These same dynamics are observed in the post-conflict period amongst groups of Ivorian ex-combatants.

Adding to these expectations are the trends of redistribution that grew out of the 1970s and 1980s. The 1970s were characterised as the beginning of

¹⁵⁶ Boone, "Electoral Populism where property rights are weak," 184.

¹⁵⁷ Boone and Kriger, "Multiparty Elections and Land Patronage," 173-4.

¹⁵⁸ Boone and Kriger, "Multiparty Elections and Land Patronage," 176.

the economic downturn, while the 1980s were characterised by increasing strikes, non-payment of civil servants, allegations of corruption, and a budding resistance to Houphouët-Boigny's one party rule.¹⁵⁹ With the decline in commodity prices and the infamous "cocoa war", economic prosperity began to dwindle, forcing the Ivoirian government to turn to IMF-sponsored austerity measures.¹⁶⁰ The IMF structural adjustment loans, combined with decreasing commodity prices, led to eventual difficulty in paying-off debts.¹⁶¹ In a recent account of Côte d'Ivoire's engagement with French and American economic models of growth, Abou Bamba identifies numerous factors that lead to the economic downturn in the 1980s. Amongst the factors identified are an over-reliance of foreign credit to finance large-scale development projects, political clientelism, and the management of state resources, underscored by a misplaced faith in the capitalist model of development.¹⁶² At the same time, the demographics of the rural areas, by the late 1980s, in the southwest had drastically shifted, with residents composed of up to 50-60% of non-indigenous inhabitants.¹⁶³ These migrant populations were seen as reaping the "lion's share of benefits for economic development".¹⁶⁴ The increased population, the closing land frontier, the decreasing production prices, as well as the reverse migration patterns of urban to rural, placed unprecedented strain on indigenous communities in the southwest, setting the stage for the politicians of the 1990s and 2000s to place issues of land and citizenship at the heart of public debate.¹⁶⁵

Concurrently, job security in the public sector began to dwindle, prompting members of privileged families to increasingly seek positions for their

¹⁵⁹ Bamba, *African Miracle, African Mirage*, 181.

¹⁶⁰ Chappell, "The Nation as Frontier," 693; McGovern, *Making War in Côte d'Ivoire*, 16; Kenneth B. Noble, "Felix Houphouët-Boigny, Ivory Coast's Leader since 1960 is dead," *New York Times*, December 8, 1993, <https://www.nytimes.com/1993/12/08/obituaries/felix-houphouet-boigny-ivory-coast-s-leader-since-freedom-in-1960-is-dead.html>.

¹⁶¹ Crook, "Patrimonialism, Administrative Effectiveness, and Economic Development," 205.

¹⁶² Bamba, *African Miracle, African Mirage*, 181.

¹⁶³ Boone and Kriger, "Multiparty Elections and Land Patronage," 186.

¹⁶⁴ Boone and Kriger, "Multiparty Elections and Land Patronage," 186.

¹⁶⁵ Boone, "Electoral Populism where property rights are weak," 190.

relatives in the Ivoirian army.¹⁶⁶ Recent accounts from both Mike McGovern and interview data from 2016-17, describe how during the 1990s, the Ivoirian army was still seen as an *Armée Fonctionnaire*, (a bureaucratic army). The army, in this sense, was perceived more as a part of the civil service that engaged more in bureaucratic processes than military operations. Increasingly, children of wealthy families comprised a significant percentage of the army's new recruits, a trend described to have gone alongside the increasing accounts of unpunished insubordination.¹⁶⁷ The army, however, was not without its share of structural adjustment austerity measures. Being subject to pay-cuts, a "*laissez-faire*" attitude developed amongst the soldiers who would resort to substituting their incomes by doing things such as putting up roadblocks and increasingly accepting bribes for routine checks.¹⁶⁸ Discussions held with Ivoirians on this matter, and occasionally mentioned in passing in the Africa Research Bulletin, revealed that the phenomenon of clientelistic ties influencing military recruitment continued through successive governments of Bédié (1993-1999), Guéï (1999-2000)¹⁶⁹, Gbagbo (2000-2010)¹⁷⁰, and most importantly, Ouattara's post-conflict regime (2011-present).¹⁷¹ One Ivoirian observer, explained how each government would divvy up open spots and encourage recruitment accordingly.¹⁷²

While little is documented about this practice before Houphouët-Boigny, or even throughout successive governments, the distribution of military posts as goods enables them to be viewed as a resource of patronage. This provides a historical reference to post-conflict political claims placed by individuals

¹⁶⁶ McGovern, *Making War in Côte d'Ivoire*, 189.

¹⁶⁷ McGovern, *Making War in Côte d'Ivoire*, 189.

¹⁶⁸ McGovern, *Making War in Côte d'Ivoire*, 189.

¹⁶⁹ The Africa Research Bulletin of October 2002 mentions in passing how some of the participants of the 2002 rebellion had been recruited by Guéï in 2001 after a mutiny to boost the numbers of soldiers loyal to him; *Africa Research Bulletin: Political, Social and Cultural Series* 39, no. 9 (October 2002): 14992.

¹⁷⁰ Richard Banegas refers to ways in which Gbagbo's military appointments took an ethno-regionalist turn and had an over representation of officers and high command posts from the west of the country, particularly from his Bété ethnic group; Richard Banegas, "Post-election crisis in Côte d'Ivoire: The gbonhi war," *African Affairs* 110, no. 440 (2011): 461.

¹⁷¹ See Chapter 6 of this thesis.

¹⁷² Ivoirian Professor, informal discussion with the author in Abidjan-Cocody, June 25, 2017, in-person.

seeking military conscription in a similar manner. This thesis demonstrates that the increased insubordination, coupled with methods of recruitment no longer dependent on trials of physical and mental feat, gave grounds for post-conflict claims of facilitated military integration for those with favourable political affinities and with little interest beyond a monthly salary. Moreover, they also gave grounds for rapid military promotion for those already in the army, both of which are discussed in Chapters 6,7, and 8. Originating in the Houphouët-Boigny era and continuing across political leadership leading into the 11-year Ivoirian crisis, both land and posts in public and private office allowed political leaders to establish an upper-hand politically amongst loyal constituents. The preferential access to these resources in the post-independence period shaped local expectations of resource distribution in the post-conflict state, particularly amongst groups of ex-combatants.

Post-Independence Claims-Making

For the most part, Houphouët-Boigny was known to have promoted a culture of dialogue rather than one of conflict. At the same time, the charismatic leader was equally suspected of using a strategy of intimidation to ward off potential political dissidents and traitors. If political dissent was suspected, Houphouët-Boigny is known to have kept the individual under intense scrutiny for a large enough time for them to either prove or implicate themselves, at which point the first course of action would be a dialogue, in a father-son way.¹⁷³ On the other hand, there were occasions where Houphouët-Boigny responded firmly to dissent, at first purging and then trying to rehabilitate potential challengers. In these situations, some have alleged that 'faux plots' were identified by the ruler, whose targets were as diverse as students returning from their studies abroad or his closest allies. The results were widespread detainments on invented charges, followed by the eventual release and co-optation of accused individuals into his political influence. Less cooperative

¹⁷³ Zartman and Delgado, *The Political Economy of Ivory Coast*, 4.

individuals frequently faced show trials or were subjected to other forms of humiliating degradation such as slanderous remarks to family members and spouses.¹⁷⁴ When seeking to quell possible military uprisings against similar punishment and humiliation, Houphouët-Boigny would begin to extend state benefits to both non-commissioned officers and officers, although the extent of such appeasement is unclear¹⁷⁵. This behaviour led some academics to believe that over the course of his 33-year reign, and especially in the first decade, Houphouët-Boigny effectively created, punished, and co-opted political opponents as a way of consolidating his political power and maintaining his allure as an uncontested paternalistic ruler.¹⁷⁶ By creating scandals around certain political 'personalities', Houphouët-Boigny sought to "bring the whole country to its knees."¹⁷⁷

Despite the generally stable political climate and the emphasis placed on pacified dialogue, Houphouët-Boigny's 33-year reign was occasionally met with isolated plots of resistance, predominantly from groups of Bété, a subgroup of the Kruan in the southwest. In 1963, for instance, Houphouët-Boigny learned that there were potential plots against the regime.¹⁷⁸ In response, he reacted with harsh punishment for the seven suspects, three of which were sentenced to death, one of which received 15 years of forced labour, one with "harsh punishment", ¹⁷⁹ and one which was acquitted. The final suspect was found dead in their prison cell.¹⁸⁰ For those who were eventually released, they were placed in administrative directorships or were co-opted into the political elite.¹⁸¹ Other notable examples include the 1969-70 Bété and Sanwi uprisings,

¹⁷⁴ Howard W. French, "Review of Samba Diarra's, *Les Faux Complots d' Houphouët-Boigny*," *Foreign Policy: Social Sciences Premium Collection* (Paris: Karthala, 1997): 116-117.

¹⁷⁵ Amadou Koné, *Houphouët-Boigny et la Crise Ivoirienne* (Paris :Karthala 2003), 83. The author was one of the political figures detained by Houphouët-Boigny and who only briefly mentioned how soldiers suspected of uprisings would be punished and then introduced to "advantages of the system".

¹⁷⁶ French, "Review of Samba Diarra's, *Les Faux Complots d'Houphouët-Boigny*," 117-118.

¹⁷⁷ Koné, *Houphouët-Boigny et la Crise Ivoirienne*, 64.

¹⁷⁸ Zartman and Delgado, *The Political Economy of Ivory Coast*, 5.

¹⁷⁹ Author's words, with little explanation.

¹⁸⁰ "Tuer Toure Velléité de Contestation," in *L'Incontournable incubateur de la démocratie 50 ans de souveraineté: Les moments clés et les acte qui font date*, Hors Série N. 6, Fraternité Matin (special edition, 2010), 13.

¹⁸¹ Zartman and Delgado, *The Political Economy of Ivory Coast*, 6.

in which a small group carried out a violent attack on state representatives and security forces in the southwest city of Gagnoa, planting a flag and declaring the “Independent State of Ebournie”. Houphouët-Boigny’s response was a brutal repression by the army, in which thousands of Bété were killed.¹⁸² Additional instances of resistance were a foiled plot by the Bété and Gouro junior military officers in 1974, and a university-led strike calling for multi-party elections in 1982. These instances were met either with offers of lucrative posts within the state apparatus or by public humiliations denouncing the treasonous acts. As a result of these actions, Houphouët-Boigny became an increasingly polarised figure amongst indigenous populations of the southwest.

From the 1980s onwards, resistance to the political and economic status quo gained momentum with the formation of a new political party, the Front Populaire Ivoirien (FPI). Created clandestinely in 1982 in the southwest city of Dabou by a small group of friends, the FPI became officialised in 1990 with Laurent Gbagbo at its head. The party held a socialist ideology, making Gbagbo, a “militant of unions and politics since 1969”, a fitting leader.¹⁸³ The FPI, under Gbagbo’s leadership, began to lobby for the rights of rural dwellers, students, workers, and the unemployed. More importantly, he began to publicly question the legitimacy of Houphouët-Boigny as an uncontested ruler.¹⁸⁴ Gbagbo argued that Houphouët-Boigny’s policy of open electoral participation for non-citizens favoured political victory for Houphouët-Boigny because of the continued concessions, particularly land and voting rights, he provided to migrant workers.¹⁸⁵ By swelling his electoral base to ensure political victory, the voices of indigenous Ivoirians, those from the southwest, were diluted.

Within communities, persisting tensions over land manifested themselves into larger themes of citizenship and belonging, both of which

¹⁸² Chappell, “The Nation as Frontier,” 671; Marshall-Fratani, “The War of ‘Who Is Who’,” 9-43; Estimates range from 1000 to 6000, and are thought to be exaggerated depending on the source (Government numbers or Bété claims).

The theme of number inflation will arise often leading into, during, and in the post-conflict statistics of Côte d’Ivoire.

¹⁸³ Emmanuel Kouassi, “Du parti unique au multipartisme,” in *L’Incontournable incubateur de la démocratie 50 ans de souveraineté: Les moments clés et les acte qui font date*, Hors Série N. 6, fraternité Matin (special edition, 2010) :20.

¹⁸⁴ Kouassi, “Du parti unique au multipartisme.” : 22.

¹⁸⁵ Dozon, *Les clefs de la crise ivoirienne*, 23; Miran-Guyon, *Guerres mystique en Côte d’Ivoire*, 304.

featured prominently in the political rhetoric of both Gbagbo and the internal Houphouët-Boigny successor Henri Konan Bédié. Both began to draw on the notion of “*Ivoirité*”, a concept introduced by Ivoirian scholar Niangoranh Porquet in an effort to develop a unified cultural signifier and identity.¹⁸⁶ In its inception, the term *Ivoirité* was conceived as noble and unifying concept, circulating amongst Ivoirian intellectuals since the 1970s to define Ivoirian identity.¹⁸⁷ The concept, however, was co-opted by politicians in the 1990s as a nationalist term, first by Henri Konan Bédié in 1993, eventually resulting in the social and political exclusion of Ivoirian residents with mixed heritage. The concept influenced policy during the electoral reform in 1994, that stipulated that presidential and legislative candidates must be born to parents with Ivoirian nationality.¹⁸⁸ The requirement to have parents of Ivoirian nationality limited the presidential candidacy of Houphouët-Boigny’s former Prime Minister, Alassane Ouattara, an Ivoirian of mixed northern lineage.¹⁸⁹ Later, in 2000, the term was used to buttress further political amendments such as the referendum of July 2000, in which 86.53% of Ivoirians voted in support of Article 35, a constitutional amendment stipulating that candidates wishing to run for presidential elections must have both a father *and* mother born on Ivoirian soil. The struggle over succession of Houphouët-Boigny’s government, between both Bédié and his former Prime Minister Alassane Ouattara, is one that set the political forces in motion leading into the 11-year conflict, and, as will be evident in the following chapters, continues to define political loyalties across groups of ex-combatants and Ivoirians alike.¹⁹⁰ Additionally, the politically contested positions following the death of Houphouët-Boigny in 1993 further fanned the flames of anti-northerner and northern-resistance positions across the country, particularly in the south.

¹⁸⁶ Ramses L. Boa Thiemélé, *L'Ivoirite entre culture et politique* (Paris : L'Harmattan, 2003), 7.

¹⁸⁷ Abu Bakarr, “Democracy and civil war,” 602.

¹⁸⁸ Abu Bakarr, “Democracy and civil war,” 602.

¹⁸⁹ Bouquet, “Géopolitique de la Côte d'Ivoire,” 23.

¹⁹⁰ A detailed overview of the political party dynamics in post-independence and post-conflict Côte d'Ivoire are provided in Chapter 5 (Gbagbo supporters).

The politicised version of *Ivoirité* gained popularity fuelling a series of inter-ethnic land disputes in the southwest rural areas and exacerbating tensions over nationality in the urban centres.¹⁹¹ University student unions sympathetic to Gbagbo's FPI increasingly hardened their stance, aligning themselves with the FPI's call for a renewed and enforced national identity. By 1998, under Bédié's government, these ideas of citizenship became codified in the *Code Foncier*, excluding those considered to be foreigners from owning land, and stopping foreigners who worked the land from passing it on to their families.¹⁹² As a result, in 1999, approximately 20,000 Burkinabés and other non-Ivoirians were expelled from Côte d'Ivoire by community gangs of the southwest who felt emboldened by the change in government policy.¹⁹³ This series of events ultimately gave way to the 11-year political crisis, and shaped the political norms of Ivoirians that continued into the post-conflict period.

The 11-year Crisis: Unverified and Opportune

When analysing the Ivoirian crisis, two observations stand out: the first being the relative absence of wide-scale violence, deaths, or humanitarian disasters that typically characterise violent civil war in Africa;¹⁹⁴ and the second, the multiple narratives of key events that perpetuate uncertainty around the identity and the number of actors involved. As Côte d'Ivoire has only recently transitioned beyond immediate post-conflict recovery, this section complements the few academic sources with personal accounts, media accounts, and human rights documentation. This section sheds light on the unconfirmed facts surrounding key events of crisis. It lays the foundation necessary to understand how the lack of certainty ultimately created windows of opportunity for opportunistic claim-makers in the post-conflict period, as will be presented in Chapters 7 and 8. Furthermore, this section builds on the

¹⁹¹ Bouquet, *Géopolitique de la Côte d'Ivoire*, 28-29.

¹⁹² *Africa Research Bulletin: Political, Social and Cultural Series* 37, no. 9 (October 2000): 14130.

¹⁹³ Boone, "Electoral Populism where property rights are weak," 192.

¹⁹⁴ McGovern, *Making war in Côte d'Ivoire*, 3; Young-Jin Choi, *La Crise Ivoirienne: Ce qu'il Faut Comprendre* (Paris: Editions Michel Lafon, 2015), 100.

history of clientelism in Côte d'Ivoire, showing where opportunities of distortion lie, and argues that the past practices of redistribution influence claims-making in the post-conflict period.

1999 Coup d'Etat

Setting off a series of events that would make up the 11-year long Ivoirian crisis was the first successful coup d'état on the 24 December 1999, ousting President Henri Konan Bédié, Houphouët-Boigny's successor. Within a context of increasing communal violence targeted towards Ivoirians of northern or migrant descent, as well as material grievances amongst the army, Ivoirians awoke to what has been locally referred to as "*le Père Noel en Treillis*" ("Santa Claus in Fatigues") that resulted in the placement of the former Chief of Staff under Houphouët-Boigny, General Robert Guéï, as the interim head of the state.¹⁹⁵

Beyond the vague recognition that the assailants were likely of northern descent, little concrete evidence is publicly known. In one account, which is supported by most academic and international newspapers, the coup was launched by a small group of disgruntled mid-ranking officers in the army, seeking payment owed to them for their service in the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic (MINURCA).¹⁹⁶ This particular version falls neatly in line with the models of mutiny put forth by Maggie Dwyer in which the exposure to other militaries obtained through participation in UN peacekeeping missions can trigger waves of claims-making upon return home.¹⁹⁷ Locally, the identity of the assailants is more complex. Amongst Ivoirians, there is an understanding that the assailants of this coup are the same individuals that would carry out the 2002 attempted coup that lead to the declaration of the

¹⁹⁵ *Africa Research Bulletin: Political, Social and Cultural Series* 36, no. 12 (January 2000): 13783-5.

¹⁹⁶ Thomas Hofnung, *La Crise En Côte-d'Ivoire : Dix Clés Pour Comprendre* (Editions La Découverte). Paris: Découverte, 2005, 37.

¹⁹⁷ Maggie Dwyer, "Peacekeeping abroad, trouble making at home: Mutinies in West Africa," *African Affairs* 114, no. 455 (2015): 206.

northern rebellion. Some of these individuals came from the ‘camorra’ group, who would later serve as Guéï’s presidential guards and then be fired due to suspected loyalties to Ouattara.¹⁹⁸ In a third account, presented by a Commando Invisibles member who alleges they participated, the coup was the unintentional consequence of drunken banter amongst the soldiers, who at the time of their intoxication were emboldened and motivated to make demands, and were later met with a rash reaction from the head of state.¹⁹⁹ In this particular rendition, it was not planned nor organised. In yet another account, which appears in the international journal *Jeune Afrique*, the 1999 coup is described as a planned event organised by three individuals, one of which was Ibrahim Coulibaly (alias “IB”), who would go on to lead the northern rebellion in the initial years, and later lead the Commando Invisibles combatant group of Abidjan during the post-electoral crisis of 2011.²⁰⁰ Over time, both international and local journals have tended to attribute the coup to IB.²⁰¹ If the coup was indeed instigated by IB and two collaborators, his involvement suggests a deeper political motive and weakens versions professing financial grievances as the primary motivator. While the motivations for the coup play a nearly inexistent role in present-day claims-making beyond individual demonstrations of arcane knowledge, the coup marks the beginning of a series of unconfirmed events defining the key events of the 11-year political conflict and that hold well into the post-conflict period. The remaining ambiguity surrounding the 1999 Coup, like several events to follow, provides enough flexibility for ex-combatants to later distort the narrative to suit their needs.

Following the coup of 1999, Guéï proceeded to establish a transitional, temporary, government with the objectives of promoting national reconciliation and ridding Côte d’Ivoire of its endemic corruption. From the onset, Guéï

¹⁹⁸ Africa Research Bulletin, Vol 37, no. 9, (October 2000): 14122.

¹⁹⁹ International DDR practitioner, interview with the author in Abidjan-II Plateaux, February 16, 2015, in-person.

²⁰⁰ “Côte d’Ivoire: Ibrahim Coulibaly emporte avec lui ses secrets,” *Jeune Afrique*, May 5, 2011, <http://www.jeuneafrique.com/191788/politique/c-te-d-ivoire-ib-emporte-avec-lui-ses-secrets/>.

²⁰¹ “Ibrahim Coulibaly,” *Jeune Afrique*, November 24, 2008, <http://www.jeuneafrique.com/206724/politique/ibrahim-coulibaly/>; “Françafrique 3/3 : En 2007, l’opération ‘Noël à Abidjan’ ou le putsch avorté contre Gbagbo en Côte d’Ivoire,” *Le Monde Afrique*, 22 April 22, 2016, http://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2016/04/22/francafrique-3-3-en-2007-l-operation-noel-a-abidjan-ou-le-putsch-avorte_4906817_3212.html.

maintained that his role was to carry the country through to the next presidential elections. Over the course of a few months, however, Guéï began to appeal to nationalistic trends thus further propelling anti-northerner/foreigner sentiments to the forefront of public debate. For some, Guéï's gradual shift to a nationalist discourse was little more than a political strategy to set himself up for his presidential candidacy a year later.²⁰² In July 2000, a referendum was held, with 86.53% of Ivoirians supporting Article 35, a constitutional amendment stipulating that candidates wishing to run for presidential elections must have both a father *and* mother born on Ivoirian soil, thus excluding Ouattara from the upcoming elections. Carrying the momentum of the referendum, anti-northerner protests broke out at the French embassy, demanding the removal of Ouattara and his supporters from Ivoirian territory.²⁰³ Within this context, Guéï announced his intention to run for president.

The "Complots" of 2000 and 2001

Similar to the 1999 Coup, two subsequent events further complicated the narrative of the conflict. During the reign of Robert Guéï and the subsequent early leadership of Laurent Gbagbo, two separate attempted coups took place: the "*Complot du Cheval Blanc*" of 2000 and the "*Complot de la Mercedes Noir*" of 2001.

On the evening of the 17th of September 2000, approximately 20 armed men attacked the private residence of interim president Robert Guéï. Violence broke out between the unknown assailants and Guéï's presidential protection team, resulting in the death of two presidential guards. Allegedly, Guéï's white horse, believed to have mystical powers, was also killed in the confrontation, thus baptising the event the "*Complot du Cheval Blanc*".²⁰⁴ Guéï, uncertain of who was behind the assault, suspected a foreign-backed attack carried out by those loyal to Alassane Ouattara, whose loyalists were widely accused of

²⁰² Ivoirian Jurist, informal discussion with the author in Abidjan-Plateau, September 21, 2016, in-person.

²⁰³ Hofnung, *La crise en Côte-d'Ivoire: Dix clés pour comprendre*, 41.

²⁰⁴ Hofnung, *La crise en Côte-d'Ivoire: Dix clés pour comprendre*, 41.

instigating the 1999 Coup, as mentioned above, and immediately fired the Ministers of Security, Transport, and Justice, all of which had alleged ties to Ouattara.²⁰⁵ The attempted 2000 coup, also now believed to be connected to northerners, further fuelled hostilities against migrant communities across the country.²⁰⁶ According to one informer, when speaking about ‘*cheval blanc*’, he claimed that the assailants were the same actors as those behind the 1999 coup that reacted to Guéï’s shift in political stance. Originally placed to help restore justice for all, Guéï’s re-orientation towards nationalistic and exclusionary politics not only put him in opposition to their desired candidate Alassane Ouattara but required a strong reaction.²⁰⁷

A little more than a month after the attempted coup, Ivoirians returned to the polls for the 22 October 2000 presidential elections. In opposition to Robert Guéï were Laurent Gbagbo and his *Front Populaire Ivoirien* (FPI) party, and Alassane Ouattara and his *Rassemblement des Républicains* (RDR) party. Ouattara, however, was excluded from the elections as a result of Article 35, which enforced a criterion of both mother and father to be of Ivoirian descent. Following the elections, both Gbagbo and Guéï declared themselves winners, setting off a series of violent clashes between Gbagbo, Guéï, and Ouattara supporters in the streets.²⁰⁸ During this time, in a public address, Gbagbo called on his supporters to engage in what would become known as the first of many “*Chasse aux Dioulas*”, a call for popular uprising against those of northern and foreign descent. Gbagbo supporters, including both youth groups and larger communities, attacked the opposition, with the justification of ridding the city of those northerners who supported Ouattara. Over the course of three days, Abidjan experienced unprecedented violence that resulted in 155 deaths, 316 wounded, and approximately 50 disappearances.²⁰⁹ As a result of rising violence, Guéï fled, leaving Gbagbo as the new President of the republic.

²⁰⁵ *Africa Research Bulletin: Political, Social and Cultural Series* 37, no. 9 (October 2000): 14108.

²⁰⁶ Hofnung, *La crise en Côte-d'Ivoire: Dix clés pour comprendre*, 42.

²⁰⁷ FN ex-combatant gatekeeper, Interview with the author in Abidjan-Yopougon, October 25, 2016.

²⁰⁸ Marshall-Fratani, “The War of ‘Who Is Who’,” 24; Bouquet, “Géopolitique de la Côte d'Ivoire,” 54; Dozon, “Les clefs de la crise ivoirienne,” 53.

²⁰⁹ Marshall-Fratani, “The War of ‘Who Is Who’,” 24; Bouquet, “Géopolitique de la Côte d'Ivoire,” 54.

Less than three months after Gbagbo's victory, on the evening of the 7-8 January 2001, the second attempted coup took place, this time targeting Gbagbo's government. Very little is documented about this attempted coup, other than it involved several heavily-armed 4x4 vehicles led by a black Mercedes vehicle, which are all said to have come from the north of the country. It is said that upon being attacked along the highway by state forces and several hours of fighting, the mysterious convoy retreated to the north, allegedly to the areas known to be bastions of Ouattara, Ferkessedougou and Kong, as recounted by respondents from both Ouattara and of Gbagbo political preferences. The assailants, it is said, took refuge in Burkina Faso, thus supporting Gbagbo's initial suspicions that the "*Complot de la Mercedes Noir*" was carried out by armed militia men, believed to be from the Dozo traditional hunting group, or by foreign fighters who were covertly backed by foreign governments.²¹⁰ At least 31 arrests were made of suspected northerners following the 2001 Coup.²¹¹ Early Ivoirian news clips suspect groups of Dozo traditional fighters or foreign fighters, both of which originated from the north, under the leadership of IB.²¹² Although the identities of the assailants have yet to be verified, it is assumed, by many Ivoirians, that the assailants were likely those with ties to Burkina Faso and who would go on to form the northern rebellion.

Both the "*Complot du Cheval Blanc*" and the "*Complot de la Mercedes Noir*" continued the Ivoirian tradition of secretive plots against government officials, as initiated during the time of Houphouët-Boigny. More importantly, however, are the elusive stories that emerge locally. The secrecy and claims that append both complots are highly relevant for understanding the basis of post-conflict political claims-making in Côte d'Ivoire. While evidence around both events is still vague, some of the existing evidence about the events suggests that early involvement in the northern rebellion was limited to a core group of individuals who re-emerged time after time. Accusations of Dozo

²¹⁰ Hofnung, *La crise en Côte-d'Ivoire: Dix clés pour comprendre*, 46.

²¹¹ *Africa Research Bulletin: Political, Social and Cultural Series* 38, no. 1 (February 2001): 14270

²¹² *Africa Research Bulletin* 38, no. 1 (February 2001): 14270

traditional hunters and foreign backing as comprising a 'parallel army' for Ouattara,²¹³ while most likely true, undermine post-conflict claims of early and forgotten participation, advanced by individuals seeking financial gain in the chapters that follow. For individuals citing the complots as their earliest combat-related engagement, the reference of unverified details has often been added credibility to their claims in the post-conflict state.

The 19th of September 2002 and the Partition

From the beginning of September 2002, rumours began to circulate across Abidjan about an upcoming coup, prompting the state to increase security around key institutions and political figures' homes. On the night of the 18th, while president Gbagbo was on an official visit to Rome, attacks were carried out in Abidjan at minister's homes and the gendarmerie school and camp. On the morning of the 19th, two major cities in the north, Bouaké and Korhogo, were declared under the control of rebel forces. Hours later, former interim president Robert Guéï was assassinated with his body found in simple civilian clothing near to the Hotel Ivoire. It is assumed that Guéï was making his way to the Cathedral in Plateau.²¹⁴

Within days of the coordinated attacks, a public announcement was made declaring a movement in the north and a new political party, the *Mouvement Patriotique de Côte d'Ivoire* (MPCI). Guillaume Soro, was declared as its spokesperson and political leader. The degree of coordination and planning put into the initial days of what eventually become known as the *Forces Nouvelles* (FN) northern rebellion, suggested a long-standing plan. Alarming to many observers was the number of new weapons in the possession of the rebels, along with new trucks, satellite telephones, and large amounts of liquid assets.²¹⁵

²¹³ *Africa Research Bulletin* 38, no. 1 (February 2001): 14271

²¹⁴ Hofnung, *La crise en Côte-d'Ivoire: Dix clés pour comprendre*, 54.

²¹⁵ Dozon, "Les clefs de la crise ivoirienne," 57; Hofnung, *La crise en Côte-d'Ivoire: Dix clés pour comprendre*, 57.

Originally placing the blame for the attack on Robert Guéï, on the 24th September, Gbagbo shifted blame to Burkina Faso, suggesting it was all a plot by Blaise Compaoré to destabilise Côte d'Ivoire.²¹⁶ Burkina Faso officially denied any involvement. Four days later, Gbagbo called on France to help, in accordance with a bilateral defence agreement dating back to 1961. France, however, refused involvement, claiming that the events that had taken place were an internal problem, and did not constitute a foreign invasion.²¹⁷ Immediately following the events, neighbourhoods in Abidjan identified as "northern" were attacked and pillaged, leaving a death toll of approximately 300.²¹⁸ Within days, France deployed its military forces in *Opération Licorne*, tasked with protecting French citizens. French forces, moreover, secured a demarcation line that effectively split the country in two between the loyalist south and the rebel-held north.²¹⁹ This buffer zone was later secured by UN peacekeepers from 2004 until it was dismantled many years later.

Consistent with the rest of the crisis, secrecy surrounded the origins of the FN's equipment, with some observers suspecting the hand of Burkina Faso.²²⁰ Early accounts from 2004, estimate that between 700 and 800 soldiers took part in the siege, occupying strategic military positions in the northeast cities of Korhogo, Bouaké, and Abidjan.²²¹ Secrecy also exists in terms of the leadership and the origins of these fighters- a secrecy that can be easily exploited in the post-conflict period for political claims-making. One account describes the identity of the assailants as soldiers from Gbagbo's state forces that were about to be retrenched.²²² Early academic accounts, as well as

²¹⁶ Miran-Guyon, *Guerres mystique en Côte d'Ivoire*, 51.

²¹⁷ Miran-Guyon, *Guerres mystique en Côte d'Ivoire*, 51.

²¹⁸ Hofnung, *La crise en Côte-d'Ivoire: Dix clés pour comprendre*, 55-56.

²¹⁹ "Les forces françaises en Côte d'Ivoire", Ministère de Défense, accessed April 8, 2016,

<https://www.defense.gouv.fr/operations/operations/autres-operations/operations-achevees/operation-licorne-2002-2015/dossier-de-presentations-de-l-operation-licorne/dossier-de-presentations-de-l-operation-licorne-aux-forces-francaises-en-cote-d-ivoire>.

²²⁰ Richard Banégas and Rene Otayek, "Le Burkina Faso dans la crise Ivoirienne: Effets d'aubaine et incertitude," Editions Karthala, *Politique Africaine* 98 (2003): 71-87.

²²¹ Miran-Guyon, *Guerres mystique en Côte d'Ivoire*, 50; Lansana Gberie and Prosper Addo, "Challenges of peace implementation in Côte D'Ivoire: report on an expert workshop by KAIPTC and ZIF," *Institute for Security Studies monograph series* 105 (2004): 8.

²²² Gberie and Addo, "Challenges of peace implementation in Côte D'Ivoire," 12.

interview data collected by this research, highlight the presence of foreign fighters from Burkina Faso making up the initial ranks of the rebellion. This conclusion is further supported by the description of some fighters not knowing their way around the major cities they went on to control.²²³ In terms of leadership, discrepancies lie around whether it was Ivoirian or Burkinabé led. According to one FN supporter, the assailants were acting under the instructions of the nascent northern rebellion, sponsored and supported by Burkina Faso's president, Blaise Compaoré.²²⁴ This particular version also serves as an explanation for how the rebellion was able to sustain itself over the course of seven years, with Burkina Faso providing financial and weapons support, soldiers, instructors, and logistical support to the FN rebellion.²²⁵ Competing accounts describe all military operations of the nascent rebellion as falling under the leadership of IB, with Guillaume Soro serving as the spokesperson.²²⁶ This last version has important implications for how post-conflict claims-makers describe their wartime experiences, as will be demonstrated in Chapter 8 (Commando Invisibles), where aligning oneself with IB is opportunistic at times and detrimental at others, depending on the audience.

Protracted Tensions: 2002-2010

From the partition of the country in 2002 to the presidential elections of 2010, few confrontations between organised armed forces of the south, against organised armed forces of the north occurred.²²⁷ As many of the migrant

²²³ Gberie and Addo, "Challenges of peace implementation in Côte D'Ivoire," 14; EFA Fighter 1, interview with the author in Abidjan-Abobo, December 26, 2016, in-person.

²²⁴ FN ex-combatant gatekeeper, interview with the author in Abidjan-Yopougon, February 16, 2016, in-person; an additional source that explores the possibility of Burkina Faso's backing is: Banegas and Otayek, "Le Burkina Faso dans la crise Ivoirienne," 77-78.

²²⁵ Fofana Moussa, "Des Forces Nouvelles au Forces Républicaines de Côte d'Ivoire: Comment une rébellion devient republicaine," Editions Karthala, *Politique Africaine* 122 (2011): 168-9.

²²⁶ Commando Invisibles, group discussion with the author in Abidjan-Abobo, October 1, 2016, in person; Banegas and Otayek, "Le Burkina Faso dans la crise Ivoirienne," 78.

²²⁷ With the notable exception of Opération Dignité, which resulted in French forces attacking Gbagbo's state forces and the destruction of Gbagbo's aerial assets. For more information on Opération Dignité, refer to Alexander

workers remained in the southwest plantation areas, localised inter-ethnic confrontations were the primary form of violence experienced during this time. The initial months of the rebellion were marked by a series of small-scale violent inter-ethnic reprisal attacks between and within communities, particularly in the southwest.²²⁸ The prevalence of small disputes at the local level in the southwest, shed important light on the type of violent conflict that characterised the greatest portion of the 11-year crisis, as well as the type of engagement required by combatants.

On the 17th of October 2002, a cease-fire was signed in Bouaké, the headquarters of the northern rebellion, to end hostilities. Both parties, however, continued to mobilise and arm supporters. On the 28th of November 2002, two new rebel-aligned armed groups were formed in the west of the country, *Mouvement Populaire Ivoirien du Grand-Ouest* (MPIGO) and *Mouvement pour la Justice et la Paix* (MJP), and were eventually absorbed into northern rebellion.²²⁹ While the emergence of two new armed groups signals mass support amongst the northern population or fragmentation among leaders, some respondents explained that their creation was little more than a strategic attempt by the FN to bypass the restrictions imposed on the FN by the ceasefire. If neither of the new groups had signed, they would not be bound by the same restrictions.²³⁰ Once again, and consistent with almost all events of the crisis, little is known about the size and composition of MPIGO and MJP. Both groups were suspected of having recruited Sierra Leonean and Liberian mercenaries, though exact figures of participation remain unknown.²³¹ Alternative versions describe how the membership of MPIGO swelled with

Mladenov, *Sukhoi Su-25 Frogfoot* (Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2013), 62; Dan Halvorson, *States of Disorder: Understanding State Failure and Intervention in the periphery* (New York: Routledge, 2016), 143.

²²⁸ Scott Strauss, "'Briefing: It's sheer horror here' Patterns of Violence during the first four months of Côte d'Ivoire's post-electoral crisis," *African Affairs* 110, no. 440 (2011): 487.

²²⁹ McGovern, *Making War in Côte d'Ivoire*, 20.

²³⁰ FN ex-combatant gatekeeper, interview with the author in Abidjan-Yopougon, August 20, 2016, in-person.

²³¹ Miran-Guyon, *Guerres mystique en Côte d'Ivoire*, 54. Military Officer Etat Major General, informal discussion with the author in Abidjan-Plateau, February 16, 2015, in-person.

approximately 800 Dozo traditional hunters prevalent in northern areas of Côte d'Ivoire.²³²

Within the FN-controlled territories, institutions mirroring those of the Ivoirian state began to form with tax systems of vehicles, economic governance structures, banking systems, and laissez-passers for NGOs and international diplomats between zones.²³³ In 2006, the FN carried out a re-organisation of the northern territory into zones- each under an individual's influence. Leaders of each of the ten zones earned the title of "Commandant de Zone" ("ComZone") and commanded groups of individuals tasked primarily with securing roads and monitoring mobility within and across zones. Moreover, ComZones equally took hold of natural resources such as gold mines and began a series of lucrative economic activities. Further detail of these activities will be presented in Chapter 6 (Integrated FN).

In the south, the rebellion was perceived amongst many as a form of foreign invasion by northerners and, in more politicised cases, French political meddling. Resistance to the northern rebellion took many forms, from official militia groups with clear leadership and territorial influence, as well as smaller-scale community defence groups, focusing more on securing their remote locations and monitoring mobility around their towns. In the time that followed the attempted coup, the infamous *escadrons de mort* commenced activities, with secretive and silent assassinations of those perceived as complicit in the northern rebellion.²³⁴ At the community-level, examples such as the 16th October Daloa executions of Muslims and northerners were carried out upon return of the city to government control. In this particular case, speculation surrounds the exact figures as well as the presence of Angolan mercenaries.²³⁵ Complementing the armed aggressions, southern-loyalists formed complementary groups of protestors and militant supporters, known as the *Jeunes Patriotes*, consolidating their presence in every part of the capital city

²³² Miran-Guyon, *Guerres mystique en Côte d'Ivoire*, 85.

²³³ Moussa, "Des Forces Nouvelles au Forces Républicaines de Côte d'Ivoire," 171; Förster, "Dialogue Direct." 205.

²³⁴ Ivoirian Jurist, discussion with the author in Abidjan-Plateau, September 21, 2016, in-person.

²³⁵ Miran-Guyon, *Guerres mystique en Côte d'Ivoire*, 53.

Abidjan and engaging in renewed nationalist and anti-northerner sentiments.²³⁶ Amongst their tactics of political aggression were public forums such as the “Sorbonne” or the many “Parliaments”, perpetuating nationalistic, and increasingly, xenophobic discourse. These different types of forums served as public outreach and dialogue platforms to spread political messages and to mobilise support for Gbagbo’s positions vis-à-vis the northern rebellion and associated localised grievances such as land issues in the southwest. Alongside these forums, civilian supporters often set up informal shops, sometimes selling nationalist merchandise in support of the southern cause.²³⁷ Armed assaults by informal supporters of Gbagbo against French and UN expatriates were mounted on two separate occasions: one as retaliation for a French retaliatory attack on Gbagbo’s aerial powers in 2004,²³⁸ and the other as retaliation against the growing presence of the UN, its arms embargo, and its sanctions on key leaders in 2006.²³⁹ In both cases, violent protests, led by Gbagbo’s *Jeunes Patriotes* broke out around the French embassy and UN peacekeeping headquarters in Abidjan, with targeted attacks against French expatriates and foreigners.

During the same time period, a series of peace talks took place, the two most notable being the Linas Marcoussis agreement in 2003, and the Ouagadougou agreements in 2007. Neither were upheld, with both parties quickly violating their terms, resulting in the refusal of either side to disarm.²⁴⁰ The Ouagadougou Political Agreement, along with its four supplements, did, however, initiate a series of attempts to re-unify the country and to hold a new set of presidential elections, by relaxing Article 35 and allowing Alassane Ouattara to run. Disagreement at the elite level as to the sequence of requirements for the Ouagadougou Political Agreement to be upheld, led to the presidential elections being postponed several times until 2010. For Gbagbo,

²³⁶ Marshall-Fratani, “The War of ‘Who Is Who’,” 28-32; Bouquet, “Géopolitique de la Côte d’Ivoire,” 92.

²³⁷ Richard Banégas, “La Politique du Gbonhi. Mobilisations patriotiques, violence milicienne, et carrières militantes en Côte d’Ivoire,” *Belin: Genèses* 4, no. 81 (2010): 31.

²³⁸ Hofnung, *La crise en Côte-d’Ivoire: Dix clés pour comprendre*, 88-95; McGovern, *Making war in Côte d’Ivoire*, 22.

²³⁹ McGovern, *Making War in Côte d’Ivoire*, 23-24.

²⁴⁰ Hofnung, *La crise en Côte-d’Ivoire: Dix clés pour comprendre*, 75-6 ; Bouquet, “Géopolitique de la Côte d’Ivoire,” 131-2.

the total reunification of the territory was a necessary pre-requisite before elections could be legitimately held, citing logistical arrangements and restricted access of state officials as the primary inhibitors.²⁴¹ The FN, under leadership of Soro, prioritised the divided territory to better assure their future and avoid intimidation.²⁴² These elections, held in theoretically unified territory although northern regions were still under the de facto control of the FN, mark the second major confrontation between both camps.

2010 Post-Electoral Crisis and the Battle of Abidjan

The post-electoral crisis is arguably *the* most significant confrontation between state forces of the south, and Ouattara supporters, and was significant enough for greater armed participation amongst Ivoirian combatants from both sides. Like most of the crisis' notable events, the persistence of unverifiable facts creates the strongest basis for individuals to lay claims to post-conflict compensation for their participation.

On the 30th October 2010, the presidential elections commenced, resulting in two rounds ultimately pitting the candidacy of Gbagbo against that of Ouattara. Both rounds had a participation rate of over 80% and resulted in the victory, although marginal, of Ouattara with 54% of the vote.²⁴³ Although certified by the UN peacekeeping mission and declared by the Independent Electoral Commission, the Constitutional Court, perceived as pro-Gbagbo, took a different stance. It called for the annulment of the results from 13 departments, thus giving grounds for Gbagbo and his supporters to contest the results.²⁴⁴

Despite the international political support for the president-elect Ouattara, he was unable to take full control of the state, as Gbagbo still held a

²⁴¹ Gberie and Addo, "Challenges of peace implementation in Côte D'Ivoire," 7.

²⁴² Choi, *La Crise Ivoirienne*, 79.

²⁴³ Thomas J. Basset, "Briefing: Winning coalition, Sore loser: Côte d'Ivoire's 2010 presidential elections," *African Affairs* 110, no. 440 (2011): 472-3.

²⁴⁴ Basset, "Briefing: Winning coalition, Sore loser," 470.

monopoly on the security institutions that remained loyal to his regime, including the Gendarmerie and special units like the *Brigade Anti-Emeute*, and the *Centre de Commandement des Operations de Sécurité*.²⁴⁵ Ouattara, unable to instil his leadership, was placed under the protective security of the UN peacekeeping mission, thus fuelling local perceptions of being a puppet candidate of foreign control that was too weak to lead the country.²⁴⁶ Hesitant to mobilise his own supporters, those who did opt to protest were bloodily suppressed by the gendarmerie. During this time, Gbagbo called for enforced curfews within Abidjan, while his supporters continued their raids, forced removals, and violently confronted northerners across the south of the country. Roadblocks were erected, inflammatory xenophobic speech was intensified, and the United Nations was restricted access to many contentious sites and mass graves.²⁴⁷

The Commando Invisibles shifted the balance of military power. Under the leadership of IB, the Commando Invisibles launched targeted attacks on the military strongholds of Gbagbo's specialised forces, inflicting significant damage to their quarters and prompting many to abandon their posts.²⁴⁸ The Commando Invisibles make up one of the most elusive parts of the crisis, with their identities and numbers defined only by speculation. What is known about this group, however, is that they engaged in armed combat in support of Ouattara, and that because of their efficient military tactics within the northern-dominated commune of Abobo, they successfully destabilised Gbagbo's forces enough to open ground for the FN rebellion to descend from the North, via the West of the country, and take control of Abidjan.²⁴⁹ Their embedded presence within Abidjan signalled that Gbagbo's *Forces de Défense et de Sécurité* (FDS) were not infallible.²⁵⁰

²⁴⁵ Banégas, "Post-election crisis in Côte d'Ivoire," 461.

²⁴⁶ Banégas, "Post-election crisis in Côte d'Ivoire," 462.

²⁴⁷ Strauss, "'Briefing: It's sheer horror here'," 484.

²⁴⁸ Banégas, "Post-election crisis in Côte d'Ivoire," 464.

²⁴⁹ Banégas, "Post-election crisis in Côte d'Ivoire," 464.

²⁵⁰ Moussa, "Des Forces Nouvelles au Forces Républicaines de Côte d'Ivoire," 163.

As the FN descended in the west, large scale human rights abuses were committed against south-western populations resistant to the FN, by this time known as the *Forces Républicaines de Côte d'Ivoire* (FRCI).²⁵¹ Amongst the atrocities recorded were the pillaging and burning of villages, and the massacres of Duékoué and surrounding southwest areas. As the FRCI established control in the southwest, tactics such as showcasing disembowelled bodies and excessive violence were used as a way of pacifying and deterring any possible resistance.²⁵² In one account, put forth by French scholar Richard Banégas, on the 1 and 3rd of April 2011, the FN, now the FRCI, encircled Abidjan and launched sporadic attacks from the periphery, while the Commando Invisible engaged in armed combat from within. Realising the force and military capabilities of the northern rebellion, multiple officers and rank-and-file soldiers loyal to Gbagbo defected or surrendered. On the 11th of April 2011, French forces surrounded Gbagbo's residence, holding him in place while the FRCI arrested him.²⁵³ Thereafter, Ouattara was able to take office and to form the first post-conflict government. In a matter of days, on the 27th of April, IB, former military leader of the northern rebellion and leader of the Commando Invisible was assassinated by the FRCI.²⁵⁴

As previously stated, the post-electoral crisis is arguably *the* most significant confrontation between state forces of the south, and Ouattara supporters. It is also crucial to recall how the Commando Invisibles' guerrilla-style tactics were the most significant combat waged against Gbagbo's state forces. The post-electoral crisis became the most lethal period of the 11-year political crisis. Fatalities are thought to number around 3,000, with some of the worst episodes of violence occurring in the southwest plantation areas, as the FN and their associated Dozo fighters descended to take control of Abidjan.²⁵⁵ These events are important as the battlefield was significant enough for greater

²⁵¹ Banégas, "Post-election crisis in Côte d'Ivoire," 465.

²⁵² Strauss, "'Briefing: It's sheer horror here'," 487.

²⁵³ Banégas, "Post-election crisis in Côte d'Ivoire," 465.

²⁵⁴ Banégas, "Post-election crisis in Côte d'Ivoire," 467.

²⁵⁵ Matthew I. Mitchell, "Land Tenure Reform and Politics in post-conflict Côte d'Ivoire: a precarious peace in western cocoa regions," *Canadian Journal of African Studies/ Revue Canadienne des Etudes Africaines* 48, no. 2 (2014): 210.

armed participation. Like most of the crisis' notable events, the persistence of unverifiable facts creates the strongest basis for individuals to lay claims to post-conflict compensation for their participation.

Post-Conflict Period: A New Form of Instability

As violent outbreaks trickled into the initial post-conflict years, Côte d'Ivoire's social, political, and economic recovery commenced. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the Ivorian crisis differs from other Sub-Saharan conflicts in a number of ways: it had few armed confrontations between loyalist-state forces and the armed groups of the FN, it had relatively few civilian casualties, and it did not have any large-scale humanitarian disasters.²⁵⁶ As of 2004, academic observers from neighbouring countries had commented on the relatively short period of combat, with low levels of destruction and casualties.²⁵⁷ Ethnographic research by Mike McGovern, made similar observations, extending them to 2007.²⁵⁸ By 2011, academic observations remained on standby of whether widespread armed violence would erupt, with Scott Strauss saying the following in 2011.

Despite conditions that favoured widespread mass atrocity, as feared by many credible observers, the dynamics of violence in Côte d'Ivoire- at least as of this writing- consistently avoided sustained exterminatory violence.²⁵⁹

Complementing these accounts are those by the UNHCR that recorded that, of the 25,000 refugees that fled into Liberia, many described fleeing the fear of potential violence, rather than violence itself.²⁶⁰

²⁵⁶ Choi, *La Crise Ivoirienne*, 100.

²⁵⁷ Gberie and Addo, "Challenges of peace implementation in Côte D'Ivoire," 6.

²⁵⁸ McGovern, *Making War in Côte d'Ivoire*, 206.

²⁵⁹ Strauss, "'Briefing: It's sheer horror here'," 482.

²⁶⁰ UNHCR, "UNHCR Building Refugee Camp for Ivoirians in Liberia, assisting displaced in Côte d'Ivoire", January 11, 2011, <http://www.unhcr.org/news/briefing/2011/1/4d2c5d789/unhcr-building-refugee-camp-ivoirians-liberia-assisting-displaced-cote-divoire.html>.

Similar to other conflicts, Côte d'Ivoire received the post-conflict recovery options typically provided to internationally-mediated peace agreements in African countries, including support for institutional power-sharing, disarmament, human rights monitoring, capacity-building programmes, and support for democratic elections.²⁶¹ However, in a crisis characterised mostly by inter-communal violence and the swelling of a parallel system of civilian governance in the north, the lines between combatant and civilian became blurred making it difficult to determine who should access post-conflict recovery compensation. One observer, who assisted with Gbagbo's side of the peace talks, explained how it was near-impossible to identify who actually participated from either camp, even within their own camp.²⁶² Many who were actually in the rebellion, had passed away, giving way for a whole new group to present themselves as veritable fighters. Verification of authenticity became a near-futile task, with significant influence reserved for those who held powerful war-time posts, such as the leaders of armed groups. For one international observer, the distribution of post-conflict posts benefitted more than ex-combatants.

People around, who were *somehow* involved in the conflict... *somehow!* The girlfriend of the guy who put air in the cars of the guys who wore uniforms!²⁶³

For other observers, critiques arose around the irrational nature of integrating so many fighters, without sufficient analysis of the army's needs. Observers began to notice how "friends", "brothers", and "sisters" were being named to posts, without obvious pre-requisite competences.²⁶⁴ While such appointments easily allow observers to decry corruption, at least two interviews with Gbagbo supporters suggested it was likely that the move was less to profit

²⁶¹ Abu Bakarr, "Democracy and civil war," 605.

²⁶² FPI Youth Leader (Affi), interview with the author in Abidjan-Riviera, June 26, 2017, in-person.

²⁶³ International DDR practitioner, interview with the author in Abidjan-Plateau, February 16, 2015, in-person.

²⁶⁴ Philippe Assalé, *Reconstruire les Forces de Défense et de Sécurité en Côte d'Ivoire*, Contribution Citoyenne (Paris: Harmattan, 2011), 124.

the commanders and more to help out low-income people.²⁶⁵ While the second is less sinister, it does support the notion of military posts as goods of redistribution, in a manner reflecting the post-independence distribution of military posts mentioned above.

The distribution was arguably one of the factors that led to perceptions amongst ex-combatants from competing groups that the posts were available more easily to those who supported Ouattara and the FN. Adding to this perception was the dominance of one narrative over the others, that of the victor's camp. In the narratives that dominated the post-conflict period, disproportional emphasis was placed on the violations committed by the Gbagbo camp, neglecting those of the FN and largely omitting the experiences of the Commando Invisibles.²⁶⁶ This sentiment was echoed across interviews with those who considered themselves as the defeated, telling stories of how they had friends and family members living in the northern-dominated areas of Abidjan who were also assaulted and chased out of the area. These accounts have failed to appear in more formal historical versions of the conflict.²⁶⁷

The emphasis placed on the violence of the Gbagbo supporters, as well as the relative neglect of the FN-derived violence may explain the relative absence of Gbagbo supporters and Commando Invisibles amongst post-conflict claims-makers. In this sense, FN-supporting ex-combatants may feel emboldened as the dominant narratives are less accusatory towards them. However, as a closer examination into the different forms of political engagement in the chapters that follow will reveal, the stigma associated with early narratives may only be a marginal factor in determining ex-combatant political behaviour. As will be demonstrated, it is rather the political affinities held by each group, as well as their expectations of governance that determine their levels of engagement in the post-conflict state.

²⁶⁵ Gbagbo-supporter, Interview with the author in Edinburgh, October 31, 2015, in-person; Ivoirian Professor, informal discussion with the author in Abidjan- II Plateaux, September 20, 2016, in-person.

²⁶⁶ A telling example is the book written by former Special Representative of the Secretary General, Young-Jin Choi, who spoke at length about the electoral crisis while almost completely omitting the attacks carried out by Commando Invisibles on Gbagbo state forces; See Choi, *La Crise Ivoirienne*.

²⁶⁷ Ivoirian Professor, interview with the author in Abidjan- II Plateaux, September 20, 2016, in-person.

Conclusion

In tracing the common trends of governance in Côte d'Ivoire since its independence from French colonial rule in 1960, this chapter highlighted the ways in which clientelistic exchanges were frequently used to consolidate political support during Houphouët-Boigny's rule. It demonstrated how the acquisition of land, as well as lucrative posts in the public, private, and military service, were used as resources of redistribution in the post-independence period. In doing so, it demonstrated precedence for post-conflict expectations of salaried posts and pay-outs for those who consider their wartime support of the Ouattara political candidacy to be justifying grounds for obtaining benefits in the post-conflict period. Such expectations, in which benefits in the form of financial compensation and facilitated employment into state salaried positions in exchange for political support, is consistent with Allen Hicken's conception of clientelism, as outlined in Chapter 2. The common elements of clientelism, those of dyadic relationships, contingency/reciprocity, hierarchy, and iteration, all of which define a specific form of distribution dependent on political support and loyalty, not only characterised post-independence governance, but continue to shape expectations for post-conflict distributions of goods amongst ex-combatant populations.²⁶⁸ This finding is likely to extend beyond ex-combatant populations and into those of the wider Ivoirian society.

This chapter laid the groundwork to support its argument that the expectations of clientelistic governance, visible through the voiced political affinities of ex-combatants as well as their proximity to individuals of political influence, are locally expected to carry into the post-conflict period. The expectation of these patterns, this thesis posits, continue to influence the behaviour of ex-combatants and their choices of political engagement in the post-conflict period. A similar argument was put forth by Michael Bratton and Nicolas Van de Walle, who applied the same logic to states undergoing democratic transitions.²⁶⁹ Bratton and Van de Walle argued that "the systematic

²⁶⁸ Hicken, "Clientelism," 293.

²⁶⁹ Bratton and Van De Walle, *Democratic Experiments in Africa*, Chapter 7 "Prospects for Democracy": 233-267.

use of state resources to promote stability through clientelism”, consistent with the literature on post-independence Côte d’Ivoire, was “likely to influence individual actions after the transition”.²⁷⁰ In such contexts, any imbalance or opposition that threatens political stability is likely to continue to be mediated by access to state resources, which would themselves be distributed in accordance with familiar methods. The institutional legacy of clientelism, would leave its mark on a state undergoing democratic transition and would likely continue to influence practices of governance going forward. Influential political actors in the post-transition phase, therefore, are likely to carry with them past practices of governance and decision-making, as are the institutions that they interact and depend on. As elaborated by Bratton and Van de Walle,

The power of institutional actors to shape democratic consolidation after the transition is largely conditioned by the political spheres created beforehand. Political actors are constrained by the past roles of such institutions as the military, political parties, and the interest associations.²⁷¹

Following this logic, one would expect pluralistic democracies to derive from states that previously supported ideas of competition and plurality. The following chapters provide significant evidence that the same holds true in post-conflict contexts. Collectively, Chapters 5,6,7 and 8 support Bratton and Van de Walle’s notion of institutional legacies, framing it rather as political continuities as it applies to the local expectations and political behaviours of Ivoirians in the post-conflict period. As post-independence governance in Côte d’Ivoire exhibited pervasive degrees of clientelistic exchanges, Ivoirians in the post-conflict state have come to expect a continuation. As a result, many of the calculations of whether to be politically engaged or not, and in what form, are influenced by this history.

The calculation of opportune time to engage specifically in claims-making behaviours is further observed to apply to groups with little knowledge of the conflict, but who have equally engaged in claims-making activities on the basis of political affinity and common ethnicity. The overview of the 11-year

²⁷⁰ Bratton and Van De Walle, *Democratic Experiments in Africa*, 242.

²⁷¹ Bratton and Van De Walle, *Democratic Experiments in Africa*, 242.

political conflict revealed where gaps in the narratives currently lay and how these might open windows of opportunity for future exploitation for claims-making. This observation is more closely analysed in Chapters 7 and 8 where individuals who morally supported the northern cause and have similar ethnic identities have engaged in claims-making under the label of ex-combatant, despite little convincing evidence that they participated. Such phenomena begs the question of whether clientelism by association is also at play.

In the chapters that follow, the common explanation given by ex-combatants with competing political affinities was that the opportunities and benefits of the post-conflict period were largely intended for those who had supported the victorious rebel insurgency of the FN and its chosen candidate, Alassane Ouattara. As such, the choice to engage in claims-making, whether in more passive or disruptive forms, was an opportunity reserved for the those with political affinities tied to the victors. Such logic suggests that because political support and loyalty were exhibited during the 11-year conflict, distributions of financial and employment benefits should be divvied up as such. The defeated, it was explained by both victors and defeated, would have to wait until their own came into power. It is from this passive acceptance that this thesis draws its core argument that the political engagement across groups of ex-combatants is mostly influenced by expectations of political continuities- that is the continuation of clientelistic exchanges in the post-conflict period.

Chapter 5 : Gbagbo Supporters as Opposition Ex-combatants

To begin an examination of the differential manner of political engagement activities across groups of Ivorian ex-combatants, this chapter first presents the case of those with political affinities tied to the politically defeated in the 11-year crisis: the Gbagbo supporters. In the data presented below, supporters of Laurent Gbagbo do not engage in public displays of claims-making for individual financial incentives, nor do they leverage their labels of ex-combatant. Rather, they choose to engage in mainstream opposition politics, through institutionally-endorsed channels under the banner of the Gbagbo-created *Front Populaire Ivoirien* (FPI) political party. Much of the reluctance to advance their individual interests, this chapter demonstrates, is rooted in feelings of defeat. Accordingly, individuals from this group do not feel they have access to the same political and economic opportunities as their counterparts.

This chapter further demonstrates how the Gbagbo supporters' expectations of clientelistic governance have influenced their political engagement strategies as well as provided justification for why some are to benefit from post-conflict spoils and others are not. Through the interviews highlighted below, Gbagbo supporters provided various explanations of why benefits for ex-combatants, particularly those tied to financial gains, were the natural spoils of the victor's: those who supported FN-backed Alassane Ouattara. The logic underpinning the excerpts below was simple: it was their time in power. Such an expectation, this thesis argues, stems from past practices of governance, in which successive regimes distributed state resources and employment opportunities in exchange for political loyalty. Following this logic, FN supporters, and more broadly, supporters of Ouattara, were being rewarded for their political loyalty during the 11-year crisis, while those from the Gbagbo-camps would wait for 'their turn' when the FPI, and in some cases Gbagbo himself, came back to power. In this sense, suggestions made by the respondents below demonstrate their long-term commitment of political loyalty to the central figure of Gbagbo himself and to the party.

In Jeremy Speight and Katrin Wittig's recent paper on rebel transformations into political parties, they argue that pre-conflict political status quos can be challenged by the ways in which ex-combatants are integrated into the post-conflict political system.²⁷² Although focusing their analysis on rebel and insurgent movements, the logic suggests that through peace negotiations, armed actors become viable political actors, occasionally displacing (and replacing) long-standing political parties at the negotiating table. As both the FN and Gbagbo supporters were absorbed back into pre-existing political parties, the political status quo remained largely undisturbed. While the FN supporters make claims directed at government officials, Gbagbo supporters are internally navigating a divided party with contested leadership, all the while remaining loyal to the founding father, Laurent Gbagbo. They have hedged their bets on an eventual return to power of the FPI.

In the sections that follow, the events of the 31st of October 2016 Constitutional Referendum are examined as they clearly depict the constraints and opportunities of political engagement perceived by the Gbagbo supporters themselves. To begin, a brief overview of political history of the FPI, situated within the larger political landscape of post-independence Côte d'Ivoire will be presented. This section will then be followed by an examination of the 2016 referendum, as an example of political engagement activity carried out by Gbagbo-supporting ex-combatants. The political engagement observed amongst Gbagbo supporters is broken down into two parts: that of the broad strategy of national opposition politics, and that of the intra-political party cleavages. This chapter demonstrates how expectations of clientelistic governance amongst Gbagbo supporters explain why they accept that their FN counterparts advance financially despite having the same 'ex-combatant' status, as well as how these expectations sow seeds of hope should their preferred candidate ever reclaim power.

²⁷² Jeremy Speight and Katrin Wittig, "Pathways from Rebellion: Rebel-party Configurations in Côte d'Ivoire and Burundi," *African Affairs* 117, no. 466 (2017): 41.

Actor Background: Gbagbo Supporters

Amongst the three groups presented in this thesis, Gbagbo supporters, FN supporters, and the Commando Invisibles, Gbagbo supporters have the longest history of organised political engagement in independent Côte d'Ivoire. Initial bases of political support were founded across the southwest through the creation of local associations, and through various politically dissident events targeting the PDCI under Houphouët-Boigny's one-party state. This section provides an overview of the political landscape following independence, the rise of the FPI, and the fall of Laurent Gbagbo in April 2011.

Since independence in 1960, Houphouët-Boigny and his PDCI political party held a virtual monopoly over political participation and access to public office. Under the one-party state, Houphouët-Boigny defined how politics were conducted, how political actors were recruited, and chose the political priorities of the state.²⁷³ Within the PDCI itself, competing visions for the party prevailed across the different 'generations' of recruits who internally vied for positions of influence typically awarded on the basis of seniority and availability.²⁷⁴ The Ivoirian political elite of the PDCI's one-party state consisted mostly of those who were educated abroad. Building from the explanation provided in Chapter 4 about Houphouët-Boigny's top-down selection of elites, Jeanne Maddox Tougara further explains how loyalty to the party developed, much of which was in the hope of political integration.

As descendants of common folk—devoid of political clout in their home districts and usually without financial backing—they [the appointed elite] tended to remain largely dependent on Houphouët for political rewards. In the past, they queued up, albeit informally, behind PDCI loyalists who could help usher them into fruitful careers.²⁷⁵

²⁷³ Aristide Zolberg, *One Party Government in the Ivory Coast* (Princeton University Press: Princeton, 1969), 3.

²⁷⁴ Jeanne Maddox Tougara, "Generations in the Partie Démocratique de Côte d'Ivoire," *African Studies Review* 38, no. 2 (1995): 13-14.

²⁷⁵ Tougara, "Generations in the Partie Démocratique de Côte d'Ivoire," 14.

Not only does the quotation reveal how political dependence developed, it introduces Nicolas Van de Walle's argument that political party strength and longevity depend, at least in part, on informal personal networks as they do to organisational heritage.²⁷⁶ The early years of the PDCI demonstrate how the benefits of informal personal relations whether effective or not, entered the psyche of Ivoirians hoping for eventual integration into the state apparatus. This is observed to have carried into the conflict period, with Gbagbo-supporting youth vying for political influence,²⁷⁷ and, as this thesis argues, continues into the post-conflict period.

Against a backdrop of PDCI domination, as well as mounting tensions between migrant and indigenous communities in the southwest, the FPI was formed clandestinely in 1982, as the first formal opposition party to Houphouët-Boigny's one-party state. The party was led by Laurent Gbagbo: an Ivoirian academic with socialist leanings from the southwest Bété ethnic group. As a university lecturer, Gbagbo publicly decried the one-party state. An example of early resistance was a speech Gbagbo had prepared on democracy and the merits of multi-party competition, which he was prevented from giving.²⁷⁸ As a result, the speech was circulated informally to bypass the strict policies of Houphouët-Boigny on political dissent. Since its creation, the FPI steadily grew its support-base and status as an influential opposition party, whose power culminated in the year 2000, when Laurent Gbagbo won the presidency, under 'calamitous conditions'. It was this political victory that set off the first wave of mass violent political mobilisation, with supporters of the outgoing transitional president, Robert Guéï (Transitional government), former president Henri Konan Bédié (PDCI party), and disqualified presidential candidate, Alassane

²⁷⁶ Michael Bratton and Nicholas Van De Walle, *Democratic Experiments in Africa: Regime Transitions in Comparative Perspective*, Cambridge Studies in Comparative Politics (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 252.

²⁷⁷ Richard Banégas, "Gouverner par la parole: Parlements de la rue, pratiques oratoires et subjectivation politique en Côte d'Ivoire," *Politique Africaine* 3 (2012): 21. This point is elaborated below through an overview of Gbagbo-supporting youth and the various ways they mobilised politically. Banégas argues that for many, this mobilisation was done, in part, with the hope that they would be able to enter politics and prosper financially.

²⁷⁸ William Zartman and Christopher Delgado, *The Political Economy of Ivory Coast* (Preager: New York, 1984), 10.

Ouattara (RDR party), taking to the streets to violently defend their political preferences.

In the initial years of his reign, Gbagbo experienced two attempted coup d'états, the first being the *Complot du Mercedes Noir*, and the second the 19th of September 2002 attacks, both of which prompted him to bolster security measures in the south. In tandem, his support-base grew more vocal with an anti-northerner rhetoric as inter-communal tensions raised. As the territorial division solidified and the UN and France took measures to contain the crisis, the anti-rebellion/northerner rhetoric broadened to that of an anti-colonial stance, drawing on notions of a new liberation for Côte d'Ivoire.²⁷⁹ For many Gbagbo supporters, whether armed or unarmed, loyalty was deeper than a call for state security, it was also in response to the collective memory of colonial rule, issues of land tenure, and the deeper cause of the autonomy and self-determination of the Ivoirian state.²⁸⁰

Over the course of the crisis, militant support for Gbagbo and the FPI in the south increased significantly. Gbagbo drew his military strength from many channels, both formal and informal, both armed and unarmed. Officially, the state security forces, the *Forces de Défense et de Sécurité* (FDS), were tasked with upholding peace and stability within the Ivoirian territory. Within the FDS, alongside the national army, gendarmerie, and the police forces, was a series of complementary forces used during the crisis including the *Brigade Anti-Emeute* (BAE), the *Centre de Commandement des Opérations de Sécurité* (CECOS), the Akouédo Battalion, and the Republican Guard. Independently, each faction was tasked with its own areas of jurisdiction. Taken together, they formed the backbone of what became known as a repressive security apparatus, staffed increasingly with FPI supporters and allegedly drawing on the support of Angolan and Liberian mercenaries within their ranks.²⁸¹ Alongside the official state forces, Gbagbo drew strength from informal forces, including several state paramilitary forces (militias), Auto-Defence Groups

²⁷⁹ Richard Banégas, "Post-election crisis in Côte d'Ivoire: The gbonhi war," *African Affairs* 110, no. 440 (2011): 458.

²⁸⁰ FPI ex-combatant gatekeeper, interview with the author in Abidjan-Cocody, November 11, 2016, in-person.

²⁸¹ Banégas, "Post-election crisis in Côte d'Ivoire," 461.

(GAD), the 'Patriotic Galaxy', and university student organisations, in particular, the *Fédération Estudiantine et Scolaire de Côte d'Ivoire* (FESCI). The presence of these formal and informal forces varied across the southern territories remaining under Gbagbo's state authorities.

In the southwest of the country, since 2002, the regime was bolstered by many paramilitary movements, the most notable being in the cities of Duékoué, Guiglo, and Toulépleu. These areas, located in the fertile lands of the southwest, were plagued by episodes of inter-communal violence between migrant communities and those indigenous to the area. Additionally, many GAD groups developed in and around the southwest. Consolidated tallies, provided by the national authorities of DDR, cited 32 groups with over 23,000 participants mobilised within their ranks.²⁸² Participation in these paramilitary groups, while done on a voluntary basis, was vast and ad hoc. Many of the people took up arms because they felt they had to protect their land and culture, and their participation often increased during periodic attacks from northerners and migrant residents.²⁸³ While some participants were militarised for a few months, others kept their membership and communication with their armed group alive for many years after violent outbreaks. Others still, joined groups long after violent outbreaks during relatively peaceful periods.²⁸⁴

In Abidjan, the regime was bolstered by the *Groupe des Patriotes pour la Paix* (GPP), which combined militia movements under the direction of a handful of leaders and became a force that would eventually act as the armed wing of the Patriotic Galaxy.²⁸⁵ The *Jeunes Patriotes*, falling under the leadership of Charles Blé Goudé, was composed of three large federations acting under the leadership of young influential figures. Seen as the civilian wing of the movement, they coordinated a series of public forums, such as the

²⁸² "Liste Chefs de Zones," Autorités Désarmement, Démobilisation, Réintégration Côte d'Ivoire, internal government working document, Abidjan 2011.

²⁸³ Magali Chelapi-Den Hamer, "Le mythe du jeune désœuvré : Analyse des interventions DDR en Côte d'Ivoire," *Afrique Contemporaine* 232, no. 4 (2009): 41.

²⁸⁴ Magali Chelapi-Den Hamer, "Les tribulations du dispositif Désarmement, démobilisation et réinsertion des miliciens en Côte d'Ivoire (2003-2015)," *Hérodote* 158, no. 3 (2015): 212.

²⁸⁵ Banégas, "Post-election crisis in Côte d'Ivoire," 461.

Parliament, Sorbonne, and Agoras,²⁸⁶ across the city that mobilised civilian protests, marches, and general pro-Gbagbo sentiments. Additional civilian support for the regime was bolstered through university student organisations such as the *Fédération Estudiantine et Scolaire de Côte d'Ivoire* (FESCI). FESCI is of particular relevance, as the crisis resulted in two of its former leaders becoming pitted against each other: Charles Blé Goudé of the *Jeunes Patriotes*, and Guillaume Soro, spokesperson and eventual leader of the FN northern rebellion.²⁸⁷ Under the successive leadership of these individuals, youth relations between Gbagbo supporters and those of migrant backgrounds became more polarised.

Together, the combination of the official FDS structures with informal armed and unarmed groups resulted in a broad range of mobilised political support for the regime amongst much of the country's southern populations. In the name of national security, members of these groups engaged in raids on neighbourhoods perceived as favourable to Ouattara. They also engaged in looting, and violence against populations of northern descent, as well as in a systematic repression of political opposition demonstrations.²⁸⁸

*"La Chute"*²⁸⁹

Despite a long and nearly successful attempt to hold onto political power, the fate of Gbagbo supporters changed drastically on the 11th of April 2011 when Laurent Gbagbo was captured by the FN forces. Following the crisis, the International Criminal Court issued arrest warrants for Laurent Gbagbo, his wife and ex-First Lady Simone Gbagbo, and the leader of the *Jeunes Patriotes*, Charles Blé Goudé. To date, both Laurent Gbagbo and Charles Blé Goudé are on trial for crimes against humanity at the ICC, while Simone Gbagbo was tried

²⁸⁶ These spaces operated as open-air forums, allowing members of the public and anyone passing by to hear the messages of those speaking. Topics and themes would have involved heated debates such as land rights, citizenship, and political developments.

²⁸⁷ Banégas, "Post-election crisis in Côte d'Ivoire," 459-460.

²⁸⁸ Banégas, "Post-election crisis in Côte d'Ivoire," 463.

²⁸⁹ A colloquial term used when talking about the fall of Gbagbo on April 11, 2011.

in Côte d'Ivoire.²⁹⁰ In contrast, Guillaume Soro, former head of the FN and adversary to Blé Goudé, was appointed to government. As a result of the capture, it is believed that many of the most militant supporters of the Gbagbo regime went into exile in Ghana or Liberia, were imprisoned, or were killed.²⁹¹ Persecution went beyond prominent political figures, with the targeting of pro-Gbagbo communities by state authorities. Instances of arbitrary arrests, detention, and torture were recorded by international observers, targeting individuals with continued loyalties to the fallen Gbagbo regime, as well as against individuals thought to be of strategic importance in planning the residual cross-border attacks on state forces.²⁹² The cross-border attacks were thought to be planned by those loyal to Gbagbo's FPI, and, consequently, resulted in a series of arrests and illegal detentions of individuals perceived to be Gbagbo supporters.²⁹³ Government crackdowns on FPI supporters in Abidjan typically took place in districts that were dominated by the FPI youth that were from ethnic groups that traditionally supported the party: that is, those originating in the southwest, and inhabiting districts like Yopougon.²⁹⁴ The frequency of the targeted attacks against Gbagbo supporters have since engrained a deep-rooted fear of persecution, compelling them to worry about their safety should they be seen as disturbing the peace.

Devastated by the defeat and the imprisonment of their leader, the FPI political party also underwent an internal leadership dispute, resulting in two camps:²⁹⁵ the official state-recognised FPI political party lead by Pascal Affi N'Guessan, former Prime Minister under Gbagbo, and the more hard-line

²⁹⁰ Sophie T. Rosenberg, "The International Criminal Court in Côte d'Ivoire: Impartiality at Stake?," *Journal of International Criminal Justice* 15 (2017): 472.

²⁹¹ International DDR practitioner, interview with the author in Plateau-Abidjan, 10 November, 2016, in-person.

²⁹² "'To consolidate this peace of ours,' A human rights agenda for Côte d'Ivoire," Human Rights Watch, 22, accessed March 17, 2018, https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/report_pdf/cdi1215_4up.pdf.

²⁹³ "'To consolidate this peace of ours,'" Human Rights Watch, 23.

²⁹⁴ "'A long way from reconciliation' Abusive military crackdown in response to security threats in Côte d'Ivoire," Human Rights Watch, 4, accessed March 17, 2018, <https://www.hrw.org/report/2012/11/18/long-way-reconciliation/abusive-military-crackdown-response-security-threats-cote>.

²⁹⁵ I have chosen the term 'camp' rather than 'branch' to describe the diverging groups as to not deviate too far from the local usage in French of "camp". The term, in its intended use implies 'group' and makes no connection to physical camps such as military camps.

loyalists lead by Aboudramane Sangaré, former Minister of Foreign Affairs under Gbagbo. The distinguishing feature between the two is the decision to participate in Ivorian political life or to reject it and abstain entirely with much of their actions hinging on the return of Laurent Gbagbo from the ICC. Simply stated, the Affi camp believes that it is important to participate in political life by negotiating with state authorities, as they prioritise the life and sustainability of the party regardless of whether Gbagbo is found guilty.²⁹⁶ Conversely, the Sangaré camp largely sees Affi's strategy as a back-handed way to turn the page of Gbagbo and legitimise the Ouattara regime, and have, therefore, chosen to prioritise a withdrawal from political life until they see the return of their leader.²⁹⁷ Although each camp is headed by a different leader with a slightly different vision of the FPI, both are unified under their loyalty to a central figure: Laurent Gbagbo. As such, the cleavages can be seen internally as a fight within a single family, rather than two different political ideologies.

Post-Conflict Political Engagement: Opposition Politics

While participation in civic life is generally taken as a positive sign of democratic governance, that of the Gbagbo's supporters is somewhat constrained. Engagement in political parties is not only a way of voicing their political preferences but is also perceived to be one of the few options available. During interviews for this thesis, respondents across political affinities overwhelmingly stated that Gbagbo supporters did not have the opportunity to engage in claims-making or to leverage their status as 'ex-combatants' to gain employment or pay-outs. During an interview at the headquarters for the *Nouvelle Alliance de la Côte d'Ivoire pour la Patrie* opposition party,²⁹⁸ the youth

²⁹⁶ Leader of FPI Youth, interview with the author in Abidjan-Riviera, June 25, 2017, in-person; Head of national Human Rights NGO, discussion with the author, October 1, 2017, online.

²⁹⁷ Head of national Human Rights NGO, discussion; Gbagbo supporters (Sangaré camp), informal discussions with the author in Abidjan-Cocody, 1 November, 2016 and June 24, 2017, in-person.

²⁹⁸ The *Nouvelle Alliance de la Côte d'Ivoire pour la Patrie* (NACIP) political party was created by long-time Gbagbo-loyalist Mohamed Sam Jichi (alias "Sam l'Africain"). Sam l'Africain testified in support to Gbagbo at the ICC, and was later detained in Abidjan for insulting remarks about President Alassane Ouattara on March 17, 2017. He has since been released on January 15, 2018. For more information, please see "Justice: Sam l'Africain retrouve la

leader explained the reluctance of Gbagbo supporters to attempt to gain employment in the armed forces or as public servants. The explanation gives insights into how the distribution of posts is expected to be carried out, placing emphasis on whether an individual is from the same 'clan'²⁹⁹ or not.

We [Gbagbo supporters] do not make claim to posts, we do not concern ourselves with trying to get into the public service, because we know that even if we tried, they would not give it to us. Even with the exams. If you get one, they will just jump over you. If you are not from their clan, it is sure that nothing will be given to you. So we prepare ourselves psychologically. Psychologically, we are prepared for many things, because we know that we cannot count on them for anything. We don't cause them any trouble with this.³⁰⁰

Similarly emphasizing the importance of political affiliation and 'clan' membership, in a different interview, a former member of the FDS who served under Gbagbo explained why they were unable to leverage their ex-combatant status to make claims.

We, we are in a position of weakness, we-the ones that they call Pro-Gbagbo. Because we lost the war. So today, [FN supporters] are putting pressure. Because it is them that can make claims because it is their 'camp' in power. So, it's them that can put on pressure.³⁰¹

The above statements shed light on a theme that was repeated frequently with respondents from the Gbagbo supporters group: they could not advance their claims because of either real or perceived obstacles in the post-conflict period. When probing deeper into the constraints that they identified, deterrents for claims-making were rooted in perceptions of an unfair political context that favoured those who pledged loyalty to the post-conflict regime. The above

liberté plus de neuf mois après," l'Infodrome, January 16, 2018, <http://www.infodrome.com/vie-politique/35975-justice-sam-l-africain-retrouve-la-liberte-plus-de-neuf-mois-apres> .

²⁹⁹ The term 'clan' is most often used by groups that do not feel part of the winning coalition. Throughout the thesis, it is used by the respondents from Gbagbo-supporting camps and the Commando Invisibles. Clan, in the Ivorian context, implies "in-group" and has mild ethnic and political connotations.

³⁰⁰ Youth leader of Nouvelle Alliance de la Côte d'Ivoire pour la Patrie (NACIP) - FPI-aligned political party, interview with the author in Abidjan-Plateau, December 1, 2016, in-person.

³⁰¹ Leader of Abidjan-based Auto Defense Group and former FDS military officer, interview with the author in Abidjan, August 19, 2016, in-person.

quotations, echoed across interviews with Gbagbo-supporting ex-combatants from diverse backgrounds, including formal state forces, militia groups, and militant political supporters, reflected how pervasive these ideas were. In a context perceived to be one-sided and where the memories of persecution are fresh, the political party becomes the most suitable vehicle to advance political interests all the while remaining relatively anonymous.

National Opposition Politics

For those with little opportunity to stake claims, but who wished to remain politically active, engagement with the national opposition political party, the FPI, was the preferred option. In a democratic context, political parties exist to aggregate and represent individual interests. If individual grievances are shared by many, political parties are an effective means to communicate these grievances, as well as demands for change, upwards to the national legislatures.³⁰² Opposition parties, more specifically, have the capability to keep ruling regimes accountable to its citizens, as well as provide political choice and alternatives to the people.³⁰³ Dissident political activities, however, may put individuals at risk of negative repercussions on either their livelihoods or their safety.³⁰⁴ In a context in which one believes in the prominence clientelistic political practices, political parties allow for a simpler form of political engagement that not only allows to the vocalisation of political dissent, but also demonstrates commitment to the central figure of the political party. In the case of the FPI, this central figure is Laurent Gbagbo. Within the boundaries of national opposition politics, ex-combatants, via the FPI political party, engaged with the state within negotiated and state-endorsed limits.

The choice of national opposition politics demonstrates continuities within the traditional support base of the FPI. As practiced in post-

³⁰² Bratton and Van De Walle, *Democratic Experiments in Africa*, 251.

³⁰³ Bratton and Van De Walle, *Democratic Experiments in Africa*, 251.

³⁰⁴ Alex Braithwaite, Jessica Maves Braithwaite and Jeffrey Kuck, "The Conditioning Effect of Protest History on the Emulation of Non-Violent Conflict," *Journal of Peace Research* 52, no. 6 (2015): 700.

independence periods during the reign of Houphouët-Boigny, early resistance was organised and largely representative of southern populations through the FPI political party. Over the course of 12 months of fieldwork in Côte d'Ivoire, the political engagement activities were exclusively carried out under the banner of the FPI party. At no point were any public demonstrations seen where Gbagbo supporters leveraged the label of ex-combatant, nor were there any demands for integration into the state security forces. What was observed amongst the Gbagbo supporters, however, were two levels of coordinated political engagement: that of opposition politics at the national level, and that of intra-party loyalties and cleavages. At the national level, Gbagbo supporters operated on a group basis through the party, with a high degree of compliance to the leaders of each political camp. The same held true at the party level, albeit to different leaders. Both levels of engagement demonstrate the importance that Ivoirians from this group place on relationships of loyalty and the beneficial transactions that could occur in a favourable climate. This finding is somewhat surprising given the widespread nature of leveraging wartime labels and experiences utilised by FN-affiliated ex-combatants. Moreover, it further reinforces the underlying argument of this thesis that 'ex-combatants' are far from a homogenous group, and whose conduct in the post-conflict period is determined largely by forces impacting clientelism: political affiliation and proximity.

For both the Affi and Sangaré camps, calls for political engagement were delivered in a top-down manner, with the leader of each camp declaring what the course of action would be. Most important to this thesis are the observations that political engagement by the Gbagbo supporting group rarely deviated from the central command, and consistently refrained from ad hoc individual or collective efforts to make claims. The strong degrees of unity under the orders each camp's respective leaders, rather than disjointed actions, reveal that even amongst the defeated, systems of loyalty to central patrons remain intact. As directly put by a Gbagbo-supporter who worked in the national DDR programme, the FPI party had once again become the face of opposition in the post-conflict period, its membership comprising of both ex-combatants and

general supporters. In the quotation below, the order was to abstain from the vote for the proposed constitutional amendments, discussed below.

There are many youths that see themselves reflected in the party. It's a party where, like all parties, you have to follow the orders. These youths abstain from voting because they are following the orders that were imposed on them by the leadership.³⁰⁵

Contrary to the case of the FN supporters who largely act independently and self-organise to engage in claims-making, Gbagbo supporters have been observed to respect a strong central command, answering to its calls for action and inaction. Further elaboration on the methods of political engagement orchestrated in a top-down manner through the FPI political party is demonstrated through the example of the Constitutional Amendments of 2016.

Constitutional Amendment and the Third Republic

On the 30th of October 2016, Ivoirians went to the polls in a national referendum to change the Constitution. The most controversial changes put forth were developed by a small committee hand-selected by the President and included the following: the creation of a Vice-President and Senate, to which one third of representatives are to be appointed by the President; removal of the age limit of the President; and removal of controversial Article 35 of citizenship that sparked the 11-year crisis.³⁰⁶ Additionally, the changes allowed for future constitutional amendments to be obtained by a two thirds approval from the National Assembly and new Senate, a provision that the opposition said facilitated future changes that the President or his state authorities wishes to make.³⁰⁷ Especially controversial was the exceptionally short time period to

³⁰⁵ Ivoirian Former ADDR staff and Gbagbo supporter, interview with the author in Abidjan, November 30, 2016, in-person.

³⁰⁶ Christian Bouquet, "Le Referendum Constitutionnel d'Octobre 2016," *Afrique Contemporaine* 3, no. 263-264 (2017): 38-39.

³⁰⁷ "Côte d'Ivoire: Respect Rights of "No" Campaign for Referendum: Respecting Rights of Opposition Key to Democratic Process," Human Rights Watch, accessed October 27, 2016, [HTTPS://WWW.HRW.ORG/NEWS/2016/10/27/COTE-DIVOIRE-RESPECT-RIGHTS-NO-CAMPAIGN-](https://www.hrw.org/news/2016/10/27/cote-divoire-respect-rights-no-campaign)

campaign, with the post-conflict regime releasing the document to the public only seven days before the vote. This decision, consequently, left only a seven-day window for political parties to explain the document to their constituents. With only a week before the public went to the polls, the decision to revise the Constitution was seen as curtailing the ability of the opposition, civil society groups, and the public to review the proposed changes to the Constitution. In response to the criticisms of the opposition, the state authorities argued that the amendments were necessary for national peace and reconciliation, with a highly visible campaign likening the vote of “Yes” with peace and security.



Image 5.1: Billboards from the Ouattara government's "Yes" campaign dominate the public space. Abidjan, 20 October 2016. Source, author's own.

The ruling party's campaign in support of referendum dominated the public space for many weeks leading into the vote. Across the capital city, large billboards displayed images of amicable relations across ethnicities, of young professionals, and of traditional leaders embracing. Slogans underneath a prominent “Yes” linked support for the referendum with improved social cohesion, modernity, peace, stability, and economic development. In stark contrast, public space allotted to the “No” campaign was little in comparison, with a monopoly of political advertising seemingly reserved for the state

[REFERENDUM](#): This provision is especially problematic for the opposition as it frequently chooses the tactic of boycott on national votes of high importance, making its representation within the state authorities minimal.

authorities. When asked about their lack of public advertising, representatives from the FPI appeared frustrated, directing attention to the dominance of one political affinity over the other.

While the proposed content of the constitutional changes raised concerns, most criticisms focused on the rushed timeline. As a result, questions arose surrounding the legitimacy of the revised Constitution and the ability of Ivoirians to understand what they were voting for. Billboards such as the ones pictured above, were criticised for appealing to emotional themes and glossing over legal substance. The allegiances of the committee selected by the President to draft the Constitution was a further point of criticism, thus calling into question the representativeness of the proposed changes.³⁰⁸ Additional concerns surrounded the state's attempts to control demonstrations during the campaign period, with security forces dispersing protesting crowds and detaining a handful of opposition leaders. Actions taken by the regime to curtail the opposition were drastic enough that Human Rights Watch drew attention to the lack of access to state media. In their publication on the matter, they described the brief suspension of two opposition-leaning local newspapers to have undermined open competition and to have limited the opposition's ability to explain their positions to the public.³⁰⁹

Leading the way amongst the opponents to the proposed constitutional amendments was the FPI, which were divided between the Affi and Sangaré camps and their supporters. Although both camps were unified in the broad strategy to boycott the vote, their respective public demonstrations differed in terms of acceptance of the limits imposed by the regime. The following section provides an overview of the unified national response, followed by an examination of the internal intra-party cleavages that affect the political engagement choices of their respective support bases.

³⁰⁸ Leader of FPI Youth, interview.

³⁰⁹ "Côte d'Ivoire: Respect Rights of "No" Campaign for Referendum," Human Rights Watch.

Boycotting as a National Opposition Strategy

Regardless of whether they supported Affi or Sangaré, the choice of boycotting the vote was unified. Engagement such as boycott loosely falls within the literature on civil resistance, that is, a form of collective political engagement that eschews violence in favour of non-violent tactics.³¹⁰ A basic tenant of civil resistance is its emphasis on a pluralistic idea of power, making those who rule ultimately dependent on the support that comes from below.³¹¹ The FPI's choice of boycott sought to challenge the legitimacy of the regime's proposed amendments. Researchers of civil resistance argue that activities such as boycotts, sit-ins, strikes, and protests have rarely been systematically repressed, even by authoritarian regimes, and remain an effective way of demonstrating resistance.³¹² Much of its success is owed to the appeal of non-violent activities to a broader set of society and its ability to attract moderate observers.³¹³

While Gbagbo-supporting ex-combatants spoke of the strategic significance of the boycott and of the security risks associated with the vote, there was still a common bottom-line. This relied on a shared belief that Ouattara had made a Constitution according to the desires of his entourage, his political party, and ultimately his northern-dominated support base. Although the supporters of Ouattara and Gbagbo experienced the same crisis, the windows of opportunity are only open to a few and the revisions within the Constitution are perceived to be a testament to that. The comments of FPI leader Affi N'Guessan on the constitutional amendments in a news article are telling.

As somebody once said, why be satisfied to participate in the dessert when you were excluded from the appetizer and the main dish. [...] Ouattara operates with Côte d'Ivoire as an owner

³¹⁰ Daniel P. Ritter, "Civil Resistance," in Della Porta, D., Diani, M., & Ritter, D. *The Oxford Handbook of Social Movements* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015): 1.

³¹¹ Ritter, "Civil Resistance," 3.

³¹² Erica Chenoweth and Maria J. Stephan, "Drop Your Weapons: When and Why Civil Resistance Works" *Foreign Affairs* 93, no. 4 (July/August 2014): 95.

³¹³ Chenoweth and Stephan, "Drop Your Weapons," 96.

vis-à-vis a personal patrimony. What he proposes is less than a Constitution, it is his will to organise the devolution of his patrimony to his successors so that this heritage remains in the family.³¹⁴

For the FPI and its support base, boycotting elections is hardly a new strategy. In 1995, the FPI allied with Ouattara's RDR party to boycott the elections held by then president Henri Konan Bédié over allegations of rigged elections. More recently, during the legislative elections of 2012, approximately one year after the highly contested and violent presidential elections between Ouattara and Gbagbo, the FPI, opted to boycott once more.³¹⁵ The momentum of boycotting was then carried through to the 2015 presidential elections, where voter turnout was officially cited at 52.86%.³¹⁶ However, multiple national and international observers suspect that this number was inflated. As one representative of the diplomatic community put it during an informal discussion, Côte d'Ivoire had not seen real elections since 2010.³¹⁷ When considered together with widespread feelings of political exclusion, a history of armed resistance, and a plethora of disenchanted members, one wonders why boycott was a desirable strategy at all, as opposed to more active and aggressive forms of political opposition.

The boycott to be held over the 30th October referendum was not necessarily uniform in meaning for those who engaged in it. For some, it was a sombre acceptance of a pre-determined outcome, while for others it was tied to a political strategy that signalled a loss of trust. For others still, the boycott was a safe response to potential state-led persecution and insecurity. Commenting on the rationale behind the boycott, one observer with familial ties

³¹⁴ "Début de la campagne du référendum sur la Constitution en Côte d'Ivoire", Agence France-Presse, October 22, 2016, <https://www.voafrique.com/a/debut-de-la-campagne-du-referendum-sur-la-constitution-en-cote-d-ivoire/3561902.html>.

³¹⁵ Julien Peyron, "Boycott by Gbagbo party clouds Ivory Coast Polls," France 24, September 10, 2012, <http://m.france24.com/en/20111209-gbagbo-party-boycotts-ivory-coast-elections-parliament-fpi-ouattara>.

³¹⁶ "Election du président de la république: Scrutin du 25 Octobre 2015: Resultats provisoires par régions: Résultats fournis par la Commission Electorale Independente," Abidjan.net, October 27, 2015, <http://abidjan.net/ELECTIONS/presidentielle/2015/resultats.html>

³¹⁷ International Diplomat, discussion with the author in Abidjan-Cocody, December 20, 2016, in-person.

to those that support the Sangaré camp explained that for some, such elections were pre-determined, thus stripping the people of any real participation.

It is the Sangaré's who are abstaining from the vote, because they do not consider it to be legitimate or transparent. For them, the vote is, the elections are, known in advance, are rigged in advance. There is no transparency. Or the CEI [Ivoirian Electoral Commission] is already corrupted. These are all the reasons why they are launching this boycott.³¹⁸

Commenting on the strategic significance of the boycott, the youth leader from the NACIP party mentioned above described the loss of trust that such a boycott signalled to the authorities. The following excerpt from the interview reveals the allure of the boycott and the strategic significance it is expected to carry.

When you stay home, it's a little blow. It's a weight. It weakens them significantly. Because you are not even in agreement with those that say "No". Same with those that say "Yes". We are many! The minority of people who will go and share the "Yes/No", they represent almost nothing! [*Gives example of 20 people, 15 abstain and only 5 go. 4 say no.*] It's not the 4 that we will look at, it's the 15 that are saying they don't want any of it. It means that they are not even in agreement with either camp." [*I intercede and explain notion of strategic vote*]. "Here, we don't see it like that. We refuse and we don't move. It's a heavy weight as well. Because they know that they are no longer liked, they are no longer in the hearts of the people. They will inflate the numbers [of participation], but they know deep down that they stole it."³¹⁹

In this sense, boycott carried a sort of moral weight. The regime would be shown that they no longer have the support of the masses, thus making their actions, and any future actions dependent on this decision, a unilateral imposition. The term 'social distance', implying the degree of intimacy or remoteness between different social groups of people, is worth introducing here. As applied in the Civil Resistance literature, social distance is a variable that influences the desired impact of an action. The shorter the distance, the

³¹⁸ Youth leader of Nouvelle Alliance de la Côte d'Ivoire pour la Patrie (NACIP), interview.

³¹⁹ Youth leader of Nouvelle Alliance de la Côte d'Ivoire pour la Patrie (NACIP), interview.

more impact the action will have. The moral undertones of this last statement reveal an advantage over the regime, that might, if a short social distance existed,³²⁰ destabilise the plans and injure the credibility of future actions.³²¹ That Ouattara's drafters displayed indifference to the pleas of the FPI, however, suggests that the regime was not affected by the moral implications of the boycott.

For others still, the choice of boycott was in response to the recent arrests and aggressive treatment of opposition leaders Sangaré and Mamadou Koulibaly. One hard-line³²² youth participating in this research justified the boycott in the following way:

You saw how they aggressively handled the leadership of the opposition? They—they want to participate politically, but they don't want the opposition to participate politically. What type of democracy are we in? We see in the world, that each party can do their own campaigns. You need convincing arguments to tell the population to vote Yes or No. Do you see how it was poorly handled?³²³

Elaborating further, the same youth added comments on the hesitance of Gbagbo supporters to engage in more vocal political behaviours beyond the FPI party.

There is always caution. The fear is always there. They aggressively broke up those youth [groups] for simply voicing their discontent with the Constitution. They flattened them. They broke them down. They yelled at them, and then they aggressively handled the leaders of the opposition. The treatment of Mamadou Koulibaly? As if he was a delinquent. So the youth, what will they make claims for? Who will they lay claims to?³²⁴

³²⁰ Kurt Schock, "The Practice and Study of Civil Resistance", *Journal of Peace Research* 50, no. 3, (2013): 284.

³²¹ Schock, "The Practice and Study of Civil Resistance," 279. Schock refers to an early study by Richard Gregg who had travelled to India and developed the concept of "moral jujitsu" as a destabilizing force against a violent oppressor.

³²² The term "hard-line" is locally used to signify Gbagbo supporters who reject all political authority outside of Gbagbo himself. "Hard-line" supporters are typically aligned with the Sangaré camp of the FPI.

³²³ Hard-line Gbagbo-supporting youth, interview with the author in Abidjan, November 30, 2016, in-person.

³²⁴ Hard-line Gbagbo-supporting youth, interview.

Despite the caution and fear explained above, there is still a clear political will to participate in the broader political system as it is. Boycotting then, is still a strategy within an established political system. This strategic acceptance of the political status quo demonstrates a certain respect for the state institutions and processes. Rather than reject and overthrow the system in its entirety, importance is placed on an eventual change of regime. This is an important finding as it demonstrates that even amongst groups of ex-combatants with significant reason for collective grievances, there is not an automatic response of using violence to enforce their desired outcomes. As aptly stated by the youth leader of NACIP, the opposition simply desires a change of regime, rather than an overhaul of the whole political system.

The concerns of the youth of FPI today are that the power changes. The challenge is not to find a way to insert yourself into their system, but to have the system change. Because the way that the power came, the youth are hesitant to collaborate with them.³²⁵

It is not the political norms that are under scrutiny by the Gbagbo supporters, rather it is leadership, the regime, and the way that they came to power. Boycotting the vote, is then, an expression of dissent against the rulers, rather than against the system.

Although boycott was the broad strategy of the FPI, an understanding of the cleavages within the party is necessary to uncover the different levels of political engagement.

Intra-Party Cleavages and Opposition

Within the FPI camps, there are both unifying and dividing perspectives. For both camps, the ultimate criticism of the Constitution was that it deviated from 'the people', and was perceived as a document made by, and for, the current ruling state authorities.³²⁶ Despite both choosing a march as part of their

³²⁵ Youth leader of Nouvelle Alliance de la Côte d'Ivoire pour la Patrie (NACIP), interview.

³²⁶ Leader of FPI Youth, interview.

public demonstration against the Constitution, there was a divergence in approach, with one respecting the constraints imposed by the regime and the other disregarding them. For Affi and his FPI political party, the eventual course of action was a march and a call for supporters to abstain from the vote. Similarly, the Sangaré camp staged a march and called on his supporters to abstain. The crucial difference, however, is that while the Affi group acted in accordance with state-imposed constraints, the Sangaré camp acted on its own volition, resulting in aggressive suppression from state security forces. Although their internal cleavages will be discussed in the intra-party section, the semblance in their response to the state authorities' proposal reflects the larger national-level opposition political strategy.

State-Authorised Response: Affi's Compliance

To express their discontent, the Affi camp of the FPI responded in a way that respected both the desire of the regime and its institutions. As described by two different individuals on separate occasions, one of whom was the Youth Leader of the FPI Affi camp and the other of whom coordinated the party's security, the following course of action was developed. Initially, a sit-in was planned for the 5th of October 2016 and was to be held at the National Assembly on the day that the Constitution was to be presented internally to elected representatives. The sit-in was in response to the FPI's sentiment that their concerns were not being heard nor addressed. Upon running this proposal past the regime, however, it was rejected. The regime formally prohibited the sit-in, both directly to the party and with an official *communiqué de presse*.³²⁷ The latter explained that since the administration had not received written notification of the event, the Prefecture of Abidjan did not authorise it. The document also reminded the public that demonstrations in public domain required authorisation. Such an event, it stated, would bring public disorder. Elaborating further, both respondents from within Affi's camp of the FPI,

³²⁷ "Communiqué No. 32/16-PA-CICG-OCT.2016," Le Préfet du Département d'Abidjan, <http://www.gouv.ci/communiqué-detail.php?recordID=323>.

described the reason presented to Affi. Allegedly, the state authorities were concerned that the sit-in could trigger violent confrontations, adding to a situation that was already precarious due to an internal political dispute between president Ouattara and the Speaker of the House, and former rebel leader, Guillaume Soro.³²⁸ It was determined that, in light of the regime's internal disputes, it was too big of a risk to allow FPI grievances in such close proximity. The state did, however, grant Affi's FPI permission to stage a march, far away from the national assembly. One of the respondents, serving in the security unit for Affi's FPI, described his attendance in two meetings with the national authorities to set the terms of the march. Over these two meetings, they met with the Prefet of the region, and set the times, dates, and venues. Although the FPI preferred Wednesday, the 5th of October to coincide with the release of the proposed Constitution to the National Assembly, the authorities urged them to choose Sunday. They complied.³²⁹ For the locations of the march, Affi's camp proposed the itinerary, and ended up marching initially from the community of Adjamé towards the central district and government centre of Plateau. The regime then intervened once again, and told them to go towards Agban, in the direction of a military camp.³³⁰ Finally, in agreement with the regime, the march took place on the 8th of October 2016, in the *Place des Martyrs* area of downtown Abidjan.³³¹

In the end, Affi's camp of the FPI altered its original plans in accordance with directives from the regime. Although originally intended to be a demonstration against state actions, on their own terms in a more contentious way and in a more contentious local (in front of the national assembly), the political party carried out a peaceful demonstration following state orders. When inquiring why Affi's FPI willingly altered its course of action in compliance with the conditions placed, the respondent from the FPI party explained the following

³²⁸ Leader of FPI Youth, interview.

³²⁹ Individual from security unit of FPI, interview with the author in Abidjan, January 10, 2017, in-person.

³³⁰ Leader of FPI Youth, interview.

³³¹ "Côte d'Ivoire: Une marche à Abidjan contre le projet de nouvelle constitution," Radio France Internationale, recorded on October 9, 2016, <http://www.rfi.fr/afrique/20161009-cote-ivoire-affi-nguessan-marche-abidjan-contre-projet-nouvelle-constitution>.

logic. As a strategy, the FPI did not resist the demands of the state. Internally, it was understood that if they resisted and marched on the days they wanted in the direction they wanted, there would be a risk that the state forces would resort to aggressive suppression, possibly injuring some of the reluctant participants who were already wary of the potential repercussions their opposition might evoke. According to the leader of the FPI Youth wing, this anticipated aggression would ultimately hamper the growing movement of vocal discontent, placing participants in high-risk environments that could result in their refusal to mobilise in the future. The strategy, then, was to march peacefully, gradually ridding the participants of fear and the sense of oppression from the regime.³³²

Non-Authorised Response: Sangaré's Defiance

Although similarly opposing the proposed Constitution, the Sangaré camp deviated from Affi's strategy by determining the terms of their march independent from state authorisation. Allegedly, the Sangaré camp was authorised to hold their demonstration within the confines of the national football stadium, located in the central district of Plateau, not too far from the National Assembly.³³³ Appearing in a local newspaper, however, the spokesperson for the Sangaré camp declared that their choice of political engagement would only be made through a discussion with its supporters,³³⁴ diverging greatly from Affi's strategy of negotiating the terms of political engagement with the regime. The march would be carried out on the streets of downtown Abidjan, within the public eye. Sangaré called on his supporters to participate in a march, entitled "the march of dignity and rediscovered honour of the Ivoirian people" on the 20th of October.³³⁵ Instead of staying within the stadium, the march started at

³³² Leader of FPI Youth, interview.

³³³ Leader of FPI Youth, interview.

³³⁴ David Gone, "Côte d'Ivoire / Nouvelle Constitution: Abou Drahamane Sangaré donne la position du FPI vrai," October 3, 2016, <http://www.afrique-sur7.fr/30498/cote-divoire-nouvelle-constitution-abou-drahamane-sangare-donne-la-position-du-fpi-vrai/>.

³³⁵ Translation from 'la Marche de la dignité et de l'honneur retrouvés du Peuple ivoirien'.

the large intersection Indenié Adjamé and moved in the direction of the *Place de la République*/Presidential Palace in downtown Plateau. This difference in approach is important to understanding the nuances in the FPI. It shows that despite following the same broad act of political resistance that Affi's followers engaged in, there is also internal posturing and competition amongst the two factions, and a public attempt to distinguish themselves from one another to bolster their support base.

On the 20th of October 2016, Sangaré and his political allies, collectively and temporarily known as the *Front de Refus*, led their supporters to the streets to oppose the new constitution. Shortly after, however, police arrived to disperse the crowds as the event had not been authorised. To quell the demonstration, police used a combination of crowd control tactics together with the arrests of influential personalities within the march.³³⁶ Aboudramane Sangaré was amongst the first to be led into a police vehicle, followed shortly thereafter by Danièle Boni Claverie, the ex-President of the political party *l'Union pour la Démocratie et la République* (UDR), and Konan Kouadio Simeon, the former presidential candidate in 2015. Following the arrests of the leaders, police fired tear gas on the remaining demonstrators, which broke up the march within a one-hour period.³³⁷

Following the events of the 20th of October, the Minister of the Interior, explained to local and international journalists that the government responded as they did to the demonstration by the *Front de Refus* because it was prohibited. The protestors had not obtained the proper authorisation from the government. Negotiations with the Prefect, which were similarly held with Affi's FPI, did not result in an agreement over the route that the demonstrators were to take.³³⁸ On the 22nd of October 2016, Sangaré and other prominent leaders of the march, organised a press conference to denounce the behaviour of the police and to call its supporters for a new demonstration. Upon explaining the

³³⁶ "Côte d'Ivoire: Respect Rights of "No" Campaign for Referendum," Human Rights Watch.

³³⁷ "Constitution ivoirienne: arrestations d'opposants lors d'une manifestation," Radio France International, recorded on October 20, 2016, <http://www.rfi.fr/afrique/20161020-constitution-ivoirienne-arrestations-opposants-lors-une-manifestation>.

³³⁸ "Constitution ivoirienne: arrestations d'opposants lors d'une manifestation," Radio France International.

situation, the leaders called for a “giga meeting” in the FPI bastion, Yopougon. On the 30th of October, the day of the vote, images spread on social media of a handful of individuals from the town of Gagnoa vandalising voting booths and tearing voting cards.³³⁹ As alleged by members of the Affi camp, these small acts of individual vandalism were discreetly encouraged by Sangaré through informal channels.³⁴⁰

Not adhering to state conditions had consequences for the political opposition beyond the Sangaré camp. The leader of another opposition political party, *Liberté et démocratie pour la République* (LIDER), led by the former President of the National Assembly under Gbagbo, Mamadou Koulibaly, was also arrested on the morning of 5th of October 2017 at the National Assembly. Koulibaly and his party had decided that they too would participate in the sit-in planned by Affi’s FPI, originally scheduled to coincide with the release of the new constitution to the National Assembly. When Affi’s FPI changed course, Koulibaly maintained the original plan, insisting that everybody had the right to welcome the President as he opened a new session.³⁴¹ Although Koulibaly initially resisted his removal, the responding security officer called for back-up, resulting in the detainment of Koulibaly for a few hours before being released again.³⁴²

Understanding Defeat

The political approach of the FPI, and more broadly that of the Gbagbo supporters, is arguably rooted in a general perception of ‘victor’s justice’ and an expectation of clientelistic political practices. Often linking their disadvantaged

³³⁹ Facebook search results for “Front de Refus”, accessed on January 13, 2017, <https://www.facebook.com/search/top/?q=front%20de%20refus>.

³⁴⁰ Supporter of FPI-Affi camp, discussion with the author in Abidjan, February 6, 2017, in-person.

³⁴¹ “Côte-d’Ivoire: Mamadou Koulibaly arrêté et relâché [sit-in contre la constitution Ouattara],” *ConnectionIvoire*, October 5, 2016, <http://www.connectionivoirienne.net/120958/cote-divoire-mamadou-koulibaly-arrete-devant-la-cathedrale-au-plateau-manif-contre-la-constitution-ouattara>.

³⁴² “Côte d’Ivoire: l’opposant Mamadou Koulibaly interpellé par la police, puis relâché,” *Abidjan.net*, October 5, 2016, <HTTP://NEWS.ABIDJAN.NET/H/601570.HTML>

political position to the way that the post-electoral crisis unfolded, Gbagbo supporters overwhelmingly voiced sentiments that implied a degree of acceptance, albeit reluctant and begrudging, of the current situation. This section looks briefly into the frequently cited examples of victor's justice, both the International Criminal Court (ICC) trial and the integration of Gbagbo supporters into the military and the public sector. These two observations were the most cited during the fieldwork by the respondents themselves. The section then links these perceptions to expectations of clientelistic practices of post-conflict governance.

In 2015, Laurent Gbagbo, the first head of state to be tried at the ICC, was tried for four counts of crimes against humanity for the violence resulting from the 2010-2011 post-electoral crisis. Alongside his trial is that of his former youth minister Charles Blé Goudé. Much controversy surrounds the strategy of the ICC to try Gbagbo and Blé Goudé, in what the Office of the Prosecutor has defended as a "sequenced approach". With this approach, the ICC would first focus on the alleged crimes of the pro-Gbagbo camp, and later those of the pro-Ouattara camp.³⁴³ Defending the approach as legally impartial, the decision to begin the trials with only one side has been criticised by Gbagbo supporters, national and international human rights organisations, and representatives of the UN.³⁴⁴ Such criticisms highlight the risks of being locally seen as promoting asymmetrical justice, of reinforcing the national authorities, and of hampering national reconciliation between the two opposing sides.³⁴⁵

Gbagbo supporters have reasonable grounds to perceive such bias. For one, as of March 2015, the BBC reported that over 75 Gbagbo supporters "had been tried domestically for crimes against state security".³⁴⁶ By the time the former First Lady, Simone Gbagbo was called to trial in Abidjan, 82 loyalists

³⁴³ Rosenberg, "The International Criminal Court in Côte d'Ivoire," 472.

³⁴⁴ For examples please refer to Doudou Diene, "Report of the Independent Expert on the Situation of Human Rights in Côte d'Ivoire," UN Doc. A/HRC/25/73, January 13, 2014; Robbie Correy-Boulet, "Gbagbo's Trial is the Latest Sign of Victor's Justice in Côte d'Ivoire", *World Politics Review*, May 4, 2016; and various interviews and informal discussions with Ivoirians from both the Gbagbo and Ouattara camps, numerous dates between 2016-2017.

³⁴⁵ Rosenberg, "The International Criminal Court in Côte d'Ivoire," 471.

³⁴⁶ "Ivory Coast's Former First Lady Simone Gbagbo Jailed," BBC News, March 10, 2015, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-31809073>.

from Gbagbo's regime were tried and received sentences ranging between 18 months to 22 years.³⁴⁷ Although judicial summons were eventually issued for several former ComZones, to date they remain free, guaranteed to never be tried at the ICC,³⁴⁸ and have even received lucrative promotions after the mutinies of January and May 2017.³⁴⁹

Second, although the frequency of attacks against Gbagbo supporters has been reduced in the past few years, the fear of persecution remains a significant deterrent for these individuals. This fear is heightened amongst those who have already identified themselves as ex-combatants. In the case of Gbagbo-supporting ex-combatants, the label of 'ex-combatant' has more risk than it does reward. In a context of seemingly one-sided persecution, incentives to remain silent and to keep a low profile are heightened. The fear felt by Gbagbo-supporting ex-combatants was captured by this research following the *Forces Armées de Côte d'Ivoire* (FACI) mutinies of January 2017.

In late-December 2016, the gatekeeper for the Gbagbo-supporting ex-combatants mentioned that for a temporary period, a small group of former FDS fighters had attempted to form an association. The primary characteristic of this association was that it was for 'ex-combatants'. The individuals forming the association, as recounted by the gatekeeper, had been recruited into Gbagbo's FDS in the final phases of the post-electoral crisis to bolster the number of soldiers on the ground. Upon the fall of Gbagbo and the transfer of political power to Ouattara, these individuals had lost their places in the army as it attempted to absorb the fighters of the north as the consolidated *Forces Républicaines de Côte d'Ivoire* (FRCI), now called FACI. Conveniently, the gatekeeper possessed a list of names and contact details which were obtained through previous outreach programmes that he partially led. Originally having

³⁴⁷ Giulia Piccolino, "Côte d'Ivoire's victor's justice? The ICC, the Gbagbos, and the Mega-Trial," March 25, 2015, <http://africanarguments.org/2015/03/25-cote-divoires-victors-justice-icc-the-gbagbos-and-the-mega-trial-by-giulia-piccolino/>.

³⁴⁸ "Alassane Ouattara: No more Ivoirians will go to ICC," BBC News, February 5, 2015, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-35502013>

³⁴⁹ "Military Nominations," Communiqué de Presse, January 26, 2017, hardcopy provided by International Organisation practitioner.

waited until after Christmas and the New Year to organise a discussion session and to contact the listed ex-combatants, the plan was derailed by the first mutiny of January 2017 (see Chapter 6). To meet the members of the former association, multiple phone calls were made to set-up private one-on-one or group discussions at the liberty of the respondents. The calls were initially made a few days after the end of the mutiny, followed by a second wave a few weeks later. The gatekeeper was well known for his political affinities to Gbagbo's FPI and would first ask respondents to verify their identity, to which most responded that it was indeed them. Upon hearing that they were being approached to discuss their association, however, they either denied that they were the individual sought, said it was the wrong number, or simply hung up. Questioning why this had happened, the gatekeeper explained that following the mutiny, there were a series of arrests made. According to him, those on the pro-Gbagbo side most likely feared that people were launching investigations and looking for a way to lay blame on somebody for the disruptions caused by the mutiny. The gatekeeper explained that this would help the regime signal its control to the local population and would further allow them to reduce the number of their adversaries.³⁵⁰ The gatekeeper explained that this was normal behaviour following contentious events with ex-combatants and that these groups likely thought that the authorities were looking for people to put in prison. Moreover, the gatekeeper explained that even amongst those on the list, many would have deliberately cut contact with their peers to quell any suspicions of organised rebellion against the Ouattara regime.³⁵¹

The above-mentioned examples brought up by Gbagbo supporters demonstrate how the ICC process and contentious political events have planted perceptions of lopsided justice and unwarranted persecution in the post-conflict period. These examples, despite not making direct reference to their individual wartime experiences, provide a partial explanation of why Gbagbo-supporting ex-combatants see less utility in leveraging their labels of ex-combatant. It is, however, important to note that just because Gbagbo supporters have refrained

³⁵⁰ Author's fieldnotes from Abidjan, January 10, 2017.

³⁵¹ FPI ex-combatant gatekeeper, discussion.

from using the 'ex-combatant' label in a public claims-making way, it does not mean that they have divorced themselves of it entirely. As one respondent who worked in the national DDR programme and who had Gbagbo-loyalties explained, ex-combatant status was not abandoned indefinitely.

The feeling of being ex-GAD [Auto Defence Group], of having participated, for the moment is placed to the side. For now, we say 'bon, everything is calm, we are here in our corner.' But some are waiting for a little spark/match, to unearth a bunch of things, but for the moment, each and every one is seated and trying to follow the different orders put forth by the different [political party] leaders.³⁵²

In the above quotation, the label of 'ex-combatant' has been temporarily shelved. It reaffirms that the label is not seen as strategically important in the current political context, and yet, that it has not been discarded of entirely. The label has a political function. It is an internal claim to their political patrons, and not one to the larger society or to Ouattara regime. While the political context was generally deemed inopportune for Gbagbo supporters, there was a strong consensus amongst the respondents that it was very conducive for claims-making for their FN-counterparts. The post-conflict context had a number of opportunities available to ex-combatants to earn a modest payment, develop a new set of skills, and be funded for a small revenue-generating project.

The second frequently cited example of victor's justice, while not entirely justice-related, is in relation to the integration opportunities available in post-conflict states: the security sector and public service. To obtain stable employment is typically seen as one of the possible spoils of war. Recalling that the FDS were the official state forces under Gbagbo's rule, this research first sought to establish whether Gbagbo's loyalist soldiers were retained beyond his defeat. A previous official work-related visit, undertaken by the author, to the 3rd Battalion in Bouaké in 2015, revealed that tensions existed within the ranks of the top commanding officers of the base. When inquiring further into the hostile attitude of some, colleagues from the national armed forces, the unified FACI, explained that many commanders that held top positions during

³⁵² Ivorian Former ADDR staff and Gbagbo-supporter, interview.

the Gbagbo regime were now under the command of their former adversaries, the recently integrated FN. Not only were their weapons taken away, but so too was the sense of pride that would have accompanied an officer of senior rank.³⁵³ Citing this event during the interviews for this research elicited several answers the same scenario—officers who once held significant power were now subjected to the command of their adversaries. On this subject, one former FDS officer confirmed the situation described above.

Yes, yes, yes. They are still in it. The FDS are still there. But today, they do not have a voice, they do not have the right to have a voice. They do not even have the right to bear arms. They don't even have their own opinion to voice. They submit. They submit, they watch, they let it go, it's like that.³⁵⁴

For the FDS who remained beyond the crisis within the new national army, the *Forces Républicaines Côte d'Ivoire* (FRCI, became the FACI in 2016), stories arose over poor and degrading treatment from the new, FAFN-dominated leadership,³⁵⁵ stripping the former soldiers of the right to hold weapons and removing them from top commanding posts.³⁵⁶ In addition, it was lamented that the lingua franca of the army was no longer French, as many of the newly integrated did not have a solid grasp of the language. The inability of the soldiers to interact with a common language was described as further exacerbating annoyance amongst those FDS with long-standing careers in the armed forces.³⁵⁷

The sentiment of northern domination in the post-conflict period also extended to employment in the public service. Although this topic was never brought up in the interviews, respondents sometimes felt it was necessary to extend their observations beyond the military. Numerous Gbagbo supporters, including those who obtained employment in the post-conflict recovery sector,

³⁵³ Ivoirian Former ADDR staff and Gbagbo-supporter and Etat Major General officer and FN-supporter, informal discussion with the author in Bouake, September 15, 2015, in-person.

³⁵⁴ Leader of Abidjan-based Auto Defense Group and former FDS military officer, interview.

³⁵⁵ Ivoirian Former ADDR staff and Gbagbo-supporter and Etat Major General officer and FN-supporter, informal discussion.

³⁵⁶ Leader of Abidjan-based Auto Defense Group and former FDS military officer, interview.

³⁵⁷ Leader of Abidjan-based Auto Defense Group and former FDS military officer, interview.

described that many of Gbagbo's supporters lost their jobs once he lost power. Some respondents attributed this loss of employment to simple reprisal, based largely on the ethnic provenance of their names.³⁵⁸ Upon explaining the shift of demographics within state institutions, one young Gbagbo-supporter concluded the interview by saying, "It's too bad for this country of ours. This country that belongs to Ivoirians but is today rule by foreigners."³⁵⁹ Whether or not the statement is dramatised, conclusive remarks such as this were frequently used across discussions with respondents from the Gbagbo supporters group.

Expecting Political Continuities

For many Gbagbo supporters, the crisis is not over, it has merely taken on a different form. Political power imbalances and the associated suppression of dissent has historical roots dating back to the colonial rule of the French. The same southwestern populations that opposed the French eventually formed the support base of the FPI during the post-colonial period. Amongst the most prominent groups to resist Houphouët-Boigny's policies were the Bété ethnic group, known for uprisings such as Kragbé Gnagbé's October 26th, 1970 declaration of the Independent State of Eburnie. Holding high prominence amongst the most recounted stories of the Bété, the attempted secession of Kragbé Gnagbé was violently suppressed, resulting in the group limiting its future willingness to vocalise dissent.³⁶⁰ Constraints around political opposition were similarly present during the Bédié years (1993-1999), as was evident through the curtailing of the freedom of the press (opposition-learning newspaper *La Voie*) all the way to Guéï's one-year junta. Both Bédié and Guéï were known for actively silencing political opponents through allegations of criminal behaviour. The curtailing of political opposition was similarly used as a tactic during Gbagbo's rule, with the justification of identifying and rooting out

³⁵⁸ Youth leader of Nouvelle Alliance de la Côte d'Ivoire pour la Patrie (NACIP), interview.

³⁵⁹ Hardline Gbagbo-supporting youth, interview.

³⁶⁰ "Il était une fois 'Kragbé Gnagbé': le père de la 'République d'Eburnie'," *Imatin.Net, Série Portrait*, November 20, 2017, http://www.imatin.net/article/portrait/il-etait-une-fois—kragbe-gnagbe—le-pere-de-la-republique-d-eburnie-_85672_1511183951.html.

possible FN infiltrators and influential FN supporters. Therefore, as all political parties that have come to power have used these tactics, it is reasonable to conclude that suppression of expression and dissent were more, and continue to be, a matter of political allegiance and ethnic belonging.³⁶¹

Beyond the history of political dissent and suppression, the expectation of clientelistic practices helps explain the passive stance of the Gbagbo supporters in light of the unfair treatment they perceive. In this sense, the incentives attached to ex-combatant status, including financial benefits and other revenue-generating opportunities, such as small projects and systematic integration into the security and public state sectors, were the natural spoils of the victors, as it was during their time in power. Such an expectation, this thesis argues, stems from past practices of governance, in which successive regimes employed practices of clientelism to consolidate their support bases and to co-opt their rivals. As demonstrated in Chapter 4, salaried positions within both the security and public sector were used as goods of redistribution, according to the preferences of the regime of the day. The Gbagbo supporters' reluctant acceptance of the distribution of post-conflict 'spoils' to their counterparts, suggests the continuation of, and even compliance with, this practice. More interestingly, it signals that should the tables turn, that this same group might find it justifiable to once again redistribute these goods for their gain.

The above sections outline the general sentiments of defeat, with an overview of the examples most frequently cited during discussions with Gbagbo supporters. Feelings of defeat alone, however, are insufficient in predicting what a common political action or response would be. Building from the examples above, this section demonstrates how individuals' expectations of clientelistic exchanges, as interest-maximising exchanges for resources and political support, are what ultimately influence their choice of political engagement.

One of the essential features of clientelism is the asymmetric relationship between the parties. One party holding higher socio-political status than the

³⁶¹ Leader of FPI Youth, interview.

other, or 'having friends in high places', allows for a series of interactions over time, where trust and commitment become foundational.³⁶² One respondent placed emphasis on the importance of having one's own representatives in positions of power to produce satisfying results from claims-making.

They cannot do it [make claims]. Because they lost the war. Me, how I see this: here we fought, and we lost. Who will we go make claims to? Our leaders/commanders are no longer there. The only ones that are there are the ones that we fought against. We don't have a leader. Some are dead, others joined the victors, so, according to me, it's all that together that makes it so that they stay calm and opt to continue the battle in the political arena... In general, the Ivoirian population, everybody is discontent. Economically, it is not going well. So, who will these youths make claims to? They have other concerns. Looking to make ends meet. Trying to advance the political battle because they don't have the means to... they are not even listened to!³⁶³

This statement suggests a strategy of opting-out of political engagement as they feel their demands would fall in deaf ears. However, not every respondent felt as inclined to opt-out.

Going beyond the necessity of having "your own" in power, the youth leader from NACIP spoke about what resistance to the regime would entail. By placing emphasis on the need of financial and organisational capacity to form a strong and effective opposition, this respondent likened the weakened position of Gbagbo-supporting youths to that of an object becoming fragile. To put up an effective resistance, it was explained, one must have a representative in a position of power that has significant financial and organisational influence. To regain the strength to resist, the respondent listed the types of support that needed to be readily available.

To bring resistance, you need the means. You need mentors who know how to apply pressure. Godfathers. Because everything requires organisation. There is a minimum threshold to attain before you can carry out a large-scale protest. It's all

³⁶² Tina Hilgers, "Clientelism and Conceptual Stretching: Differentiating among Concepts and among Analytical Levels," *Theory and Society* 40, no. 5 (2011): 568, 573.

³⁶³ Ivoirian Former ADDR staff and Gbagbo-supporter, interview.

these things that are missing right now that render the youth in a position of weakness.³⁶⁴

The above statement demonstrates the importance allotted to having an influential patron. Despite Affi and Sangaré each leading their own camps in the FPI, neither is seen to have entirely filled the void left by Laurent Gbagbo. Given the statement above, neither is equally seen as possessing the means to organise effective political space for their supporters. In this sense, the perceived prerequisite of loyalty to a strong leader is found wanting and is not enough for them to be able to engage in their own versions of claims-making for financial compensation tied to their wartime experiences.

Alongside the consensus of needing a strong leader with resources, a minority of respondents also alluded to the potential physical threats that could occur should they take on a more active voice for political dissidence. For these respondents, the weakened position vis-à-vis those who wield political power was a natural consequence of the armed intervention that removed Gbagbo. Responses that emphasised the violent descent of the FN/FRCI into Abidjan often followed the following logic: the Ouattara regime had come to power in with the support of the international community and with weapons. As they are an electorate minority, any political resistance from the other groups would be a threat.³⁶⁵ Elaborating, one young adult explained the following.

Today the youth cannot make claims, because they know who they are dealing with. They know that the current power did not come in a pacified way. It's a rebellion that took control. And so, all the young militants of the FPI, today they cannot make claims because if they try, those that have luck will be put into prison, and in the worst cases, death. This is because we know that those we are confronted with do not engage in dialogue. They don't like dialogue. They don't like contradictory debate. So, the youth of the FPI, if they are quiet, it's because the current power is a brutal power. They did not come in a pacified way, they did not come by elections, they came as a rebellion that took control.³⁶⁶

³⁶⁴ Youth leader of Nouvelle Alliance de la Côte d'Ivoire pour la Patrie (NACIP), interview.

³⁶⁵ Leader FPI Youth, interview.

³⁶⁶ Hard-line Gbagbo-supporting youth, interview.

Conclusion

Ex-combatants from the Gbagbo supporters group have prioritised a political engagement strategy of national opposition politics. For the majority of the post-conflict period, individuals from this group refrained from leveraging their status as ex-combatant for financial gain or for integration into the state security forces, with one exception of an ex-combatant association that formed and rapidly disbanded itself for fear of persecution. The excerpts from interview and informal discussions reveal that much of the reluctance to advance their interests is rooted in feelings of defeat within the context of their opponent's victory. Defeat, in their interpretation, is tied to an increased likelihood of political and violent physical suppression, as well as the loss of opportunities for socio-political advancement. The opportunities to engage in claims-making, and to advance one's interests in the post-conflict period, are seen to belong to the victors—those who supported the FN northern rebellion and the post-conflict ruling regime of Alassane Ouattara.

Despite refraining from claims-making activities, ex-combatants from the Gbagbo supporters group have chosen to engage with the regime via political parties. Marches, demonstrations, or other forms of engagement were carried out under the banner of an, albeit divided, opposition political party and were well organised with a relatively large number of participants.³⁶⁷ Moreover, these demonstrations were always in response to political decisions or actions of the regime and were never observed to advance the economic interests of their distinct group. This type of political engagement, that of organised political opposition, prioritises the official politics of the state rather than individual interests, all the while allowing political dissidents to remain relatively anonymous when vocalising their grievances and demands.

The October 2016 constitutional amendments serve as a case that exemplifies a typical institutional response, revealing the current powers and

³⁶⁷ For all public demonstrations observed, participation was usually around 200-300 people, making it considerably larger than individual efforts of claim-making observed in other groups.

limits of the opposition, and more broadly, the defeated. While both camps of the FPI wield significant influence over their supporters, defining where action should be taken and where it should be restrained, the parties perceive themselves to be constrained under the heavy fist of Ouattara's regime. For many observers, the degree of state control over public demonstrations fuelled perceptions amongst Gbagbo supporters that, even unified, there were limits to their voice being heard. With international organisations such as Human Rights Watch calling on the regime to "respect the freedom of expression and association of political parties opposing [the] draft constitution,"³⁶⁸ perceptions of political exclusion went beyond groups of ex-combatants.

Despite the perceived constraints imposed on Gbagbo supporters, the unified efforts of political engagement demonstrate a certain degree of compliance with state institutions and processes. Although both the Affi and the Sangaré camps denied the legitimacy of the proposed Constitution and, more broadly, the legitimacy of the state authorities themselves, Affi's camp opted to comply with state authority orders while Sangaré and the *Front de Refus* chose to act independently. Neither endorsed a violent response, nor called for the overhaul of the political system. Additionally, despite the differences in strategy for their respective marches, both camps maintained cohesion and loyalty amongst their respective supporters. Once the terms of the demonstration were determined and called for, supporters from each group acted in compliance with their political parties and rarely deviated from its calls.

This chapter demonstrated how Gbagbo-supporting ex-combatants, the political opposition, is largely excluded from power in the post-conflict period. Despite this, their networks continue to function, leading to question whether there is more going on within the FPI than crude clientelism. As the FPI is not in power, there is a limited supply of resources and benefits that can be distributed amongst its support base. Responses from those interviewed, however, demonstrate that clientelism is at play and that supporters are hedging their bets for the long-run. In much of the responses, allusions were

³⁶⁸ "Côte d'Ivoire: Respect Rights of "No" Campaign for Referendum," Human Rights Watch.

made to the future, when their preferred party, and ideally Laurent Gbagbo himself, comes back to power. While this chapter recognises that for many, it is the simple victory of Gbagbo's political ideology that would suffice, others voiced hope for future collective benefits. Clientelism, in this sense, manifests itself through the hope of future benefits, rather than an immediate gain.³⁶⁹ Gbagbo supporters are invested in the long haul, which explains why their networks remain intact and their political engagement less obstructive.

Gbagbo supporters, under the leadership of two distinct central political figures, are engaging within an established political system, however reluctant their support of it may be. The strategic acceptance of victor's justice suggests a certain acceptance of the current political situation, in which individuals from the Gbagbo supporters feel weakened and constrained in their ability to engage in claims-making. Complementing this expectation, however, is the reference that respondents occasionally made to their return to political power. Expressions like "when our time comes" were used to predict a return to justice, to equity, and to Ivoirian rule. The hopeful change in political leadership would bring with it compensation to make up for lost post-conflict opportunities that Gbagbo supporters may have been reluctant, and possibly unable, to exploit. When questioned if Gbagbo-supporting ex-combatants might similarly engage in the same types of claims-making should their own leaders be in power, the former member of the FDS said yes.

For sure. For sure. Not necessarily to be in the army, but at least to receive the 800,000 F CFA resocialisation money [allotted to ex-combatants in the DDR programme], or to be integrated into the paramilitary structures. There are many structures that we can insert our youth [such as the] penitentiary guards, prefecture guards, etc... We can insert them somewhere, or group them together and then finance them to work, so that they can take control of their lives.³⁷⁰

This commentator suggests that Gbagbo-supporting ex-combatants would be able to engage in a similar type of claims-making for benefits typically tied to

³⁶⁹ Allen Hicken, "Clientelism," *The Annual Review of Political Science* 14, (2011): 291.

³⁷⁰ Leader of Abidjan-based Auto Defense Group and former FDS military officer, interview.

ex-combatant status. This sentiment reinforces arguments by Nicolas Van de Walle that maintaining a visible degree of political mobilisation within a party is a way of creating prospects for individuals to move from the outside of an active clientelist network to the inside once a new government, in this case this FPI, comes to power.³⁷¹ Adding to the above statement, the same respondent reaffirmed his position.

If ever the FPI came back into power, I am sure that they would acknowledge their youth and help them to take control of their livelihoods.³⁷²

These statements are interesting, as they demonstrate that current Gbagbo-supporting ex-combatants do not yet feel that they have a powerful enough leader to open the space required for them to engage in claims-making. Despite a politically active FPI, both leaders Affi and Sangaré do not seem strong enough to deliver the types of spoils that the FN-supporting peers are able to get from the ruling regime under Ouattara. As evident from the lack of impact FPI protesting has on the constitutional amendments, the FPI does not seem to have the political power or weight necessary to lend the impact they desire to their actions. As Ivoirian reggae artist Tiken Jah Fakoly recently commented in an article on the 20th of March, 2018 that appeared in *Jeune Afrique*, leaders of the FPI have placed overwhelming importance on the central figure of Laurent Gbagbo, in what Fakoly called a strategy of “*Gbagbo où rien*.” Accordingly, Fakoly comments on how the opposition has seemingly forgotten about the grievances of its population base, and of Ivoirians as a whole, and has placed all its political efforts into battles about the return of Laurent Gbagbo and his return to his rightful place within the FPI.³⁷³ Such comments further demonstrate the importance that both Sangaré and Affi both place on the central figure of Laurent Gbagbo, suggesting that he is still seen as the central

³⁷¹ Bratton and Van De Walle, *Democratic Experiments in Africa*, 258.

³⁷² Leader of Abidjan-based Auto Defense Group and former FDS military officer, interview.

³⁷³ Andre S. Konan, “Côte d’Ivoire- Tiken Jah Fakoly: ‘Je suis porte-voix du petit peuple’,” *Jeune Afrique*, March 20, 2018, http://www.jeuneafrique.com/543823/politique/cote-divoire-tiken-jah-fakoly-le-president-ouattara-a-rompu-le-contrat-qui-nousliait/?utm_source=Newsletter_JA_Actu&utm_medium=Email&utm_campaign=Newsletter_JA_Actu_21_03_18.

patron to which political appeals will most effectively be addressed. This is an important finding as it demonstrates that even amongst groups of ex-combatants with significant reason for collective grievances, there is not an automatic response of using a history of violence to push through their desired outcomes.

This chapter further demonstrated the differential way ex-combatants politically engage with the post-conflict state. While it may be unsurprising that those with sentiments of defeat refrain from staking financial claims, the case of the Gbagbo supporters further demonstrates how political terrain is not perceived as equal in the post-conflict period. This finding is important in that it challenges assumptions that liberal peacebuilding strategies flawlessly open windows of opportunity, and promote inclusivity, for all. With increasing calls amongst the academic literature to 'bring politics back in' to ex-combatant analysis, this chapter showed that despite being politically defeated, dissatisfied with the post-conflict order, and obtaining relatively less benefits than other groups of ex-combatants, Gbagbo supporters consistently choose to shelve the ex-combatant label. Instead, they chose to rally around Gbagbo's political party, the FPI. This chapter, therefore, begins to introduce nuance around understandings of ex-combatant behaviours.

In closing, Gbagbo-supporting ex-combatants lack a sense of empowerment to make their claims. The following explanation most aptly summarizes this point.

There is always a sense of caution in Côte d'Ivoire. The youth of the FPI know who they are dealing with. They cannot make claims like their enemies. Look at the other camp: they protest and paralyze a city, but what do the state authorities do? The authorities discuss with them to say "no, you have your claims there, and some will be compensated, the president is listening, so we will see what he says." They have a mutual understanding. The young rebels, they outnumber the youth of the FPI. They still have their zones. Today the youth of the FPI no longer have their zones, so how will they make claims? They can't! So they are forced to accept it.³⁷⁴

³⁷⁴ Hard-line Gbagbo-supporting youth, interview.

The time for claims-making, and the obtaining of other social, political, and financial benefits are the natural spoils of the victors, to which this group does not belong. This perception is grounded in expectations of clientelistic political practices, in which interest-maximizing opportunities are dependent on the personal loyalties one has to those in power. Internally, however, loyalty continues unabated around the central figure of Laurent Gbagbo. In this sense, political support and loyalty are given not only for the crude ideological leanings of the party, but as a hope that eventually, their candidate will return to power and benefits will ensue.

Chapter 6: Ex-Forces Nouvelles as Integrated Victors

This chapter shifts focus away from the defeated by introducing the political engagement activities of those who consider themselves as victors in the 11-year political crisis: the *Forces Nouvelles* (FN) supporters. This chapter, as well as the one that follows, analyse the claims-making activities and discourse of FN-affiliated ex-combatants in the post-conflict period.

The following two chapters broadly categorise FN supporters as individuals who supported the northern FN rebellion through any of its three wings: military, economic, or political. Individuals who self-identify as FN supporters are those who are typically aligned to the former rebel leader, and current President of the National Assembly, Guillaume Soro.³⁷⁵ Amongst the FN supporters aligned with Soro, claims-making activities exist on a spectrum, which ranges from contentious actions such as military mutiny and protest, to more compliant strategies, including letter writing and forming associations. The claims put forth to the regime typically depend on the individual's status in the post-conflict period. For those who were integrated into the armed forces, demands centre on additional payments. For those who were not integrated, the demobilised (Chapter 7), claims centred on military integration- either being integrated directly into the armed forces or receiving back pay equalling the salaries that would have been earned had the individual been integrated earlier. The staking of claims by the FN groups are inherently political when compared to the activities of Gbagbo supporters and Commando Invisibles, as they are made by one politically-affiliated group to their political patrons in power. This chapter, as well as the one that follows, demonstrate how calls for increased benefits create political instability and insecurity in the post-conflict state.

As previously stated, within the broad category of FN supporters, two different groups can be identified in accordance to their post-conflict trajectories: those who obtained military integration, the Integrated FN; and

³⁷⁵ FN-rebels who broke off from the rebellion to follow rival FN leader Ibrahim Coulibaly (alias "IB"), have a unique political trajectory and are dealt with in Chapter 8. These individuals typically self-identify and are recognized as IB supporters or Commando Invisibles.

those who demobilised to civilian life, whether through a national demobilisation programme or on their own, the Demobilised FN. As a short-hand identity marker, this Chapter uses the term 'Integrated FN' to mean 'FN individuals integrated into the state armed forces'. This chapter argues that for FN supporters with greater proximity to influential political actors, the integrated, political engagement occurs on a larger, more public, and disruptive scale - that of military mutiny. The data presented below demonstrates how, on multiple occasions since 2011, Ivoirian mutineers achieved at least part of their demands for greater pay. This chapter argues that the regime's response to disruptive behaviour demonstrates continuities with past strategies of pacification: those of co-optation and pay-outs. It links these strategies with clientelism as they have only been effective for belligerents of one side- those who claim to have brought the Ouattara regime to power. For those at farther proximity from influential political actors, the demobilised, claims-making activities, while occasionally disruptive to society, happened on a much smaller scale and were met with little to no success. As Chapter 7 (Demobilised FN) will demonstrate, their actions failed to produce results due, partly, to their weaker links with those in power.

Contrary to Chapter 5, in which Gbagbo supporters mobilised around the command and control of their political parties and the symbol of Laurent Gbagbo, this chapter reveals that the political actions of militarily active FN supporters are not embedded within party politics. Rather, they are embedded within a system of loyalty to a handful of influential actors, their former Zone Commanders and FN leadership, occupying senior positions within the national armed forces and government offices. Considered as the victors of the political crisis, from 2011 to 2017, Integrated FN combatants successfully made claims to the regime through a series of armed demonstrations and mutinies. The sections that follow examine the mutinies of January and May 2017 as cases of military politics in the post-conflict period, their effectiveness, and their impact on public perception. Additionally, this chapter traces the history of mutinies back to post-independence periods, demonstrating a degree of continuity in their usage and effectiveness.

The research techniques used for this chapter differ from those of other chapters in this thesis. First, this chapter draws mostly from local and international media coverage of the mutinies for reasons of security and restricted mobility. Second, the highly contentious nature of the mutinies meant that access to the mutineers was difficult to obtain. To verify the validity of multiple sources, this chapter triangulates public sources to examine the main argument: that claims-making is the most disruptive amongst those Ivoirian ex-combatants who consider their own patrons to be in power and who have the strongest ties to people of influence. Their disruptive forms of political engagement, that of armed mutiny, are driven by their expectations of clientelistic governance, which they presume based on past successes, will continue in the post-conflict period.

Actor Background: Forces Nouvelles

The origins of what would become the *Forces Nouvelles* (FN) Northern rebellion pre-date the North's official breakaway from the Ivoirian government in 2002. Stemming from years of discriminatory discourse and sporadic inter-communal violence pitting 'northerners' against southern indigenous populations, those who went on to form the FN consolidated a collective northern identity that was used over the next nine years as justification for rebel rule.

What became the collective 'northern cause' set the basis for the complete administrative, financial, and military separation of the northern territory from the southern-loyalist Ivoirian State, making it a nearly textbook example of rebel rule in sub-Saharan Africa. Its system of rebel-led governance, in sticking with Mampilly's conception, involved to varying degrees the provision of public goods, whether through formal (bureaucratic), or informal (ad hoc) means.³⁷⁶ From 2004 onwards, the FN consolidated its system of governance

³⁷⁶ Zachariah Cherian Mampilly, *Rebel Rulers: Insurgent Governance and Civilian Life During War* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011), 4.

with the creation of three branches. The first, the *Forces Armées des Forces Nouvelles* (FAFN), was tasked with issues of security. The second, *Le Cabinet Civil*, was the political wing. The third, *La Centrale*, was the financial wing, managing different revenue streams to support the rebellion's activities.³⁷⁷ *La Centrale* was one of the most regulated aspects of the rebellion, organised around a central office in the FN headquarter city of Bouaké. Described in several UN Group of Experts reports, *La Centrale* generated revenue in five main ways: a system of taxation on transported goods passing through checkpoints and roadblocks; taxation on major companies operating in the rebel-held zones; service charges for electricity and water bills; the extraction and export of natural resources such as gold and cocoa, smuggled from the south; and finally, revenues generated through ownership of taxation fuel depots.³⁷⁸ These various income streams financed and reinforced much of the FN organisation and helped consolidate its status as a parallel state within Côte d'Ivoire.

Flowing from the central institutions of governance were the 10 different zones within the rebel-held territories. Each zone was headed by a leader, known locally as a *Commandant de Zone* ("ComZone"), accompanied by his respective combatants. Across the 10 zones, the degrees of governance varied greatly, producing a landscape of heterogeneous authority and control.³⁷⁹ Within each zone, the ComZone oversaw highly localised wartime orders, drawing on very different forms of social, political, and economic power,³⁸⁰ and often allowed their methods of governance to be partially shaped by local cultural and religious practices.³⁸¹ In addition to variations in governance across space, the rebellion's method of governance also demonstrated change over time, keeping with Mampilly's observation that rebel rule is not necessarily path-

³⁷⁷ Jeremy Speight, "Rebel Organisation and Local Politics: Evidence from Bouna (Northern Côte d'Ivoire, 2002–10)," *Civil Wars* 15, no. 2 (2013): 227

³⁷⁸ For the most complete summary of the FN's revenue streams, see "Final report of the Group of Experts on Côte d'Ivoire pursuant to paragraph 11 of Security Council resolution 1824 (2008), S/2009/521: 15, 16, 46-51.

³⁷⁹ Speight, "Rebel Organisation and Local Politics," 220.

³⁸⁰ Speight, "Rebel Organisation and Local Politics," 223.

³⁸¹ Till Förster, "Dialogue Direct," in *Rebel Governance in Civil War*, edited by Ana Arjona, Nelson Kasfir, and Zachariah Mampilly, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 213.

dependent.³⁸² From the onset of the rebellion in 2002, the FN enjoyed moderate support across their territories, building on northern grievances from the mounting xenophobic discourse from the successive Bédié, Guéï, and Gbagbo governments. In some zones, however, relations with civilian populations began to deteriorate as accounts of indiscipline and economic predation by the foot soldiers of the rebellion became more frequent.³⁸³ In many cases beyond Côte d'Ivoire, economic predation has been linked with indiscriminate violence committed by insurgent groups for "short-term opportunities for enrichment".³⁸⁴ Jeremy Weinstein argues that, 'opportunistic volunteers' are likely to join insurgent groups when resources can be exploited, and whose presence can ultimately influence how battles are fought and how violence is used.³⁸⁵ Similar to this is the notion that political leaders could manipulate markets, especially around natural resources, to both control their rival's access to economic opportunities all the while increasing their power.³⁸⁶ In this sense, predatory violence develops in contexts where patron-based politics interacts with local markets. While there is currently not enough detailed evidence from all rebel-held zones in Côte d'Ivoire to determine when and how predatory tactics were used, what has been researched to date sheds partial light on a rebellion that was neither uniform across time nor space. Despite the variance in degrees of control over their designated territories, the ComZones effectively consolidated their personal power as military, political, and economic elites in their respective zones of influence.

To date, case studies providing systematic analysis across zones of the rebellion are few. Two, however, stand out, providing differing accounts of the ways in which the FN interacted with local populations: Till Förster's account from Korhogo, and Jeremy Speight's account of Bouna. In Förster's account, the FN shared responsibilities of security with the traditional hunting group, the

³⁸² Mampilly, *Rebel Rulers*, 15.

³⁸³ Speight, "Rebel Organisation and Local Politics," 227.

³⁸⁴ William Reno, "Explaining Patterns of Violence in Collapsed States," *Contemporary Security Policy* 30, no. 2, (2009): 356.

³⁸⁵ Jeremy Weinstein, *Inside Rebellion: The Politics of Insurgent Violence* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 7.

³⁸⁶ Reno, "Explaining Patterns of Violence in Collapsed States", 357.

Dozo. While the Dozo provided security in the inner city, the FN controlled the outer limits and highways.³⁸⁷ As the Dozo were perceived to be emblematic of ethnic honesty and integrity amongst local populations, their incorporation into the security apparatus held legitimise the new security arrangements. Moreover, the incorporation of the Dozo demonstrated a certain degree of FN compliance with the localised social norms and values.³⁸⁸ In Speight's account of Bouna, on the other hand, FN control was characterised by low levels of military discipline, allowing FN soldiers and supporters to engage in theft, economic racketeering, and occasional violence against civilians.³⁸⁹ Speight contends that large disparities existed between those who held positions of command within the rebellion and its foot soldiers. While many ComZones benefitted from the rebellion by taking control of natural resources and trade routes, low-ranking FN soldiers exerted their authority, sometimes illegally, to supplement their income.³⁹⁰ Much of this behaviour is thought to have resulted in a number of self-interested individuals making use of the rebellion for their personal gain.³⁹¹ This observation supports the interview data presented in Chapter 7, in which Demobilised FN individuals with loose ties to the rebellion made use of the rebel status to extort cash from host communities and to live free of cost. These individuals later lamented how the demobilisation payment they received in the post-conflict period was insufficient to repay their debts.

Complementing these studies are two additional accounts from respondents to this research, both of whom worked in the national weapons collection programmes. As civilians living under rebel rule, both wished to emphasise the minor impact rebel rule had on the daily lives of most civilians and combatants. For one respondent from Korhogo, rebel rule had a minimal impact on the lives of residents, with most carrying on with their daily activities uninhibited. According to this respondent, the biggest disruption to the lives of

³⁸⁷ Förster, "Dialogue Direct," 209.

³⁸⁸ Förster, "Dialogue Direct," 206.

³⁸⁹ Speight, "Rebel Organisation and Local Politics," 219.

³⁹⁰ Speight, "Rebel Organisation and Local Politics," 227.

³⁹¹ Speight, "Rebel Organisation and Local Politics," 219. The notion of self-interested individuals using the banner of the FN rebellion for self-interested purposes came up a number of times during interviews with FN-loyalists.

FN affiliates came from attending a meeting roughly once a week for a couple of hours. After the meeting, participants mostly returned to their regular civilian lives. Rarely did these FN supporters live separately from their families, from their regular occupations, or from their daily routines. In some cases, they might have been sent elsewhere to assist with patrolling.³⁹² The second account comes from the western part of the country, just slightly north of the city of Man and the demarcation line. Although this respondent's village fell under rebel rule, most villagers remained loyal to the southern loyalist forces and to Laurent Gbagbo. This respondent reinforced that little had changed in the community's daily activities. Throughout a lengthy discussion, this respondent also explained the villages' consensus that the path of least resistance was simply to comply with the rebels, regardless of whether they supported the cause.³⁹³ Accounts such as these reveal the relatively low levels of sacrifice required to participate in the FN rebellion. These accounts also sit at odds with the standing assumption that armed group participation is, without question, a significant aberration to regular civilian life. While this thesis recognises that in other contexts civil war participation can be extreme and encompassing,³⁹⁴ the case of rebel rule in Côte d'Ivoire is a good reminder that participation can vary greatly, according to the context. As these accounts of the FN rebellion run counter to the *raison d'être* of the payments and bonuses the Integrated FN received, neither Ivoirian respondent from Korhogo or Man would allow quotations to be used in this thesis.

With a relatively low threshold of what constituted participation in the rebellion, combined with the various civilian posts in the economic and political spheres, the volume and validity of individual claims of having participated in the FN rebellion are difficult to disprove. As stated repeatedly across interviews, FN claims-makers are often mixes of genuine ex-combatants and civilians.

³⁹² Halo Trust local de-miner, interview with the author in Abidjan-Cocody, January 15, 2017, in-person.

³⁹³ Ivoirian Former ADDR staff, interview with the author in Abidjan-Cocody, 9 January 2017, in-person.

³⁹⁴ Sierra Leone is an example of a civil war in which participation with an armed group involved a drastic break from regular civilian life. Please see: Ibrahim Abdullah, "Bush path to destruction: The origin and character of the Revolutionary United Front/Sierra Leone," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 36, no. 2 (1998): 203-235.

When you really search, they are not all combatants, real combatants. There are real, but there are also fake. There are also those that helped combatants with tasks that were not necessarily combat-related.³⁹⁵

The blurred lines between combatant and civilian wings of the rebellion made the task of identifying genuine FN rebels difficult. Moreover, it increased the ability of many individuals to use the ambiguous identities to their advantage. To identify FN supporters for integration and demobilisation benefits, the post-conflict regime relied on the personal endorsement of individuals by those who held positions of command in the rebellion—the ComZones and their hierarchies. With endorsements, FN supporters were able to integrate into the state armed forces and civil service, with the distribution of posts ranging from high-ranking military officers and government officials, to rank-and-file soldiers in the FACI. Although the number of Integrated FN soldiers, as well as the total number of FACI soldiers has been kept confidential, the total FACI population was estimated at 25,000 troops for an Ivoirian population of approximately 24 million.³⁹⁶

For those not integrated, lists were generated by the ComZones indicating who was a verified combatant able to enter the national Disarmament, Demobilisation, Reintegration programme. This was typically seen as the second best option, following salaried armed forces integration, as participation in the national programme granted the option of a revenue-generating livelihood project. If an FN supporter was not a recipient of any of the above-mentioned posts, he/she was destined to navigate the post-conflict period on their own, financially unassisted. Therefore, through these different post-conflict options, FN supporters gained differing forms of financial support. As a result of their stratified post-conflict positions, they sat in differing degrees of proximity to actors of political influence. In a post-conflict context characterised as an insurgent victory, sentiments of ‘our time’ were observed

³⁹⁵ FN ex-combatant gatekeeper, Interview with the author in Abidjan-Yopougon, September 30, 2017, in-person.

³⁹⁶ “Ivory Coast army cut by over two thousand troops,” *Reuters*, May 4 2018:

http://www.defenceweb.co.za/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=51587:ivory-coast-army-cut-by-over-two-thousand-troops&catid=49:National%20Security&Itemid=115.

amongst FN individuals across all positions. Collectively, claims-making was their primary form of political engagement. Amongst the FN, however, those with the highest stature within the state apparatus' have been the most disruptive to society and have been increasingly successful at advancing their interests in the post-conflict state.

Integrated FN Political Engagement: Military Mutiny

Over the past three decades, the use of military mutinies has become increasingly documented in Sub-Saharan Africa. A mutiny entails:

a group of soldiers who remain within the state's military structure and; use means of insubordination to express stated grievances and goals beyond the desire for political power to higher political and military offices.³⁹⁷

Recent data from Maggie Dwyer collected from both the regions of West and Central Africa observed a spike in mutinies since the 1990s, which draws compelling links to the increased momentum of the democratisation movements of the time. The period of democratisation was marked by a decline in authoritarian political regimes, an increase in competitive elections, and the greater awareness of political rights of citizens. Moreover, it also signalled to local populations that it was a period of renewed hope and participation in the polity.³⁹⁸ Inversely, the same period was related to an increased incidence of coups and mutinies, as discourse of human rights and good governance disseminated amongst local populations and state forces alike. Military mutiny, as observed in 2017 CDI, was less about democratisation and gaining a voice, than of advancing financial pay.

Over time, military mutinies in West and Central Africa shared several common grievances and exhibited a common set of tactics. The grievances observed centred mostly on pay and living conditions. Their tactics where

³⁹⁷ Maggie Dwyer, "Borrowed Scripts: Democratisation and military mutinies in West and Central Africa," *Conflict, Security & Development* 15, no. 2 (2015): 99.

³⁹⁸ Dwyer, "Borrowed Scripts," 98.

typically characterised by large gatherings in the streets, with mutinous soldiers firing into the air. Frequently, armouries were also broken into. Additionally, mutineers sought to control public or strategically important locations, such as military headquarters or active commercial districts. The longer the mutineers held these areas, the greater the public disruption was and the more they were able to pressure their targeted audience, which, in most cases, were their national governments. Alongside those tactics, mutineers frequently resorted to controlling transport infrastructure, such as checkpoints and roadblocks. Derived from a routine daily function for many soldiers, taking control of these posts is an unsurprising tactic, particularly if the soldiers manning them were sympathetic to the mutineers' cause. Finally, mutineers were observed to often take control of national modes of communication, such as radio stations to disseminate their grievances across a larger audience.³⁹⁹ The combination of these tactics, without resorting to actual violent actions, suggests that military mutiny has been used in West and Central Africa primarily as a way of opening dialogue with the military and political leaders. Mutiny, therefore, can be seen as a tactic of communication, and by extension of political engagement, rather than simply an act of military insubordination.⁴⁰⁰ Similarly, as observed in Côte d'Ivoire, the threat of further violent action dissipated once negotiations with high-ranking government officials opened, thus allowing the mutineers to claim success. The following data presents the political engagement activity observed amongst Integrated FN soldiers- the mutinies of January and May 2017.

On the night of January 5th, 2017, soldiers from the *Forces Armées de Côte d'Ivoire* (FACI) launched a mutiny in and around military camps across the country. The claims behind the mutiny were being made on behalf of 8,400 former FAFN soldiers who supported the northern rebellion and had allegedly not been granted all that they were promised. Amongst their claims were an overall payment of 12,000,000 F CFA (approximately £ 16,000), as well as

³⁹⁹ Maggie Dwyer, "Tactical Communication: Mutiny as a Dialogue in West and Central Africa," *African Spectrum* 50, no. 1 (2015): 12-14.

⁴⁰⁰ Dwyer, "Tactical Communication," 5, 10.

increased salaries, reduced time for military promotions, and an ECOMOG bonus payment.⁴⁰¹ In early newspaper accounts, the granting of property rights for villas was also requested, although media coverage over the course of the mutiny eventually dropped this claim. An article appearing several months later, however, linked the claim of obtaining villas to a promise made by the ComZones leading into the 2011 post-electoral crisis, promising them 12 million F CFA and villas for removing Gbagbo from power.⁴⁰²

The heart of this mutiny was in Bouaké, the former headquarters of the FN-rebellion. Over the course of three days, the mutineers fired intermittent shots into the air, vocalised their claims, and blocked multiple streets in the cities in which the mutinies took place. Most disruptive to the local populations was the blockage of the main highway entry and exit points to cities, as well as the closure of local shops and businesses.⁴⁰³ These tactics are consistent with Dwyer's examination of armed mutinies in West and Central Africa. The local police, typically tasked with enforcing security amongst civilians, voiced concern about the mutiny and suggested that they were reluctant to counter the mutinous soldiers should they use their heavy weapons. As captured by a local journalist, a police officer that spoke anonymously stated that, "We are here, it's true, but on alert. If there is firing of heavy weapons, we will go home. We are not trained to confront the military."⁴⁰⁴

In response to the mutiny, the government sent a delegation, which included the Minister of Defence, Alain Richard Donwahi, accompanied by former ComZone Issiaka Ouattara (alias "Wattao"), and the Archbishop of Bouaké, Mgr Paul-Siméon Ahouan, to address the restless soldiers.⁴⁰⁵ After

⁴⁰¹"Communiqué du Ministre de la Défense Relatif Aux Événements de Bouaké," *Ministry of Defence, Côte d'Ivoire*, January 6, 2017.

⁴⁰² Sébastien Hervieu, "Côte d'Ivoire: comment les mutins ont fait plier le gouvernement," *Le Monde*, May 26, 2017: http://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2017/05/26/cote-d-ivoire-comment-les-mutins-ont-fait-plier-le-gouvernement_5134181_3212.html#alleym2RwcILOL6v.99.

⁴⁰³ Issouf Sanogo, "Mutinerie en Côte d'Ivoire: nouveaux tirs à Bouaké avant la visite du ministre de la Défense," *AFP*, January 12, 2017: <http://news.abidjan.net/h/607706.html>.

⁴⁰⁴ Sanogo, "Mutinerie en Côte d'Ivoire."

⁴⁰⁵ "Côte d'Ivoire : tentative de médiation avec les mutins à Bouaké," *Jeune Afrique*, January 7, 2017: <http://www.jeuneafrique.com/390765/politique/cote-divoire-tentative-de-mediation-mutins-a-bouake/>.

two days of stalemate and multiple discussions with the Minister of Defence, an agreement was reached in which each of the 8,400 Integrated FN soldiers would receive 12 million F CFA (approximately £16,000) in two instalments, as well as an improvement in their living conditions. Following the agreement, the mutinous soldiers continued to fire intermittent shots into the air, allegedly to keep the pressure on the regime to respond.⁴⁰⁶ While it is unlikely, and unconfirmed, that *all* 8,400 Integrated FN soldiers took to the streets, the pay-outs would benefit them, under the precondition that they were derived from the FN rebellion. Non-mutinous soldiers typically derived from the former FDS structures did not participate or make any demands. The following excerpt, taken from an interview appearing online, shows a brief moment where the inclusion of former FDS soldiers was considered by the FN mutineers. The journalist questioned about the exclusivity of the demands.

The beneficiaries are all ex-combatants who took part in the rebellion and who are today integrated into the military since the end of the post-electoral crisis. [*Journalist interjects to verify it is only for the FN-derived soldiers. The soldier interviewed responds...*] It is for all soldiers, only that for the rebel soldiers, it will be more obvious that they fought for the power in place [the Ouattara regime].⁴⁰⁷

This quotation, although not completely excluding FDS soldiers, is consistent with the tenets of this thesis that the primary beneficiaries making claims have expectations of pay-outs based on their political loyalties their patrons who have come to power.

Despite a return to calm after the agreement had been reached, a series of disgruntled comments emerged from the opposition and the civilian populations. The public service, under the leadership of two workers unions, *La Plateforme Nationale des Organisations Professionnelles du Secteur Public de Côte d'Ivoire* and the *l'Intersyndicale des Fonctionnaires de Côte d'Ivoire*, had undertaken a mass strike of their own on January 9th, 2017. Their claims

⁴⁰⁶ Sanogo, "Mutinerie en Côte d'Ivoire."

⁴⁰⁷ "Bouake/Insurrection armée : un militaire révèle, 'on nous a promis 5 à 9 millions chacun pour enlever Gbagbo du pouvoir'," *LaSynthese.net*, January 6, 2017, <http://lasynthese.net/wordpress/2017/01/06/bouakeinsurrection-armee-en-militaire-revele-on-nous-a-promis-5-a-9-millions-chacun-si-on-enlevait-le-president-gbagbo-du-pouvoir/>

involved *inter alia*: amendments on the organisation of pension schemes; the payment of arrears estimated at 249.6 billion FCFA; the integration of public sector day labourers into the public service; and the respect for freedom of association for unions.⁴⁰⁸ Government interest in responding, however, was lagging, as their attention was focused on the mutinous soldiers. In its communiqué, which was disseminated over local media outlets, the Government highlighted the actions that it had already taken and would soon take to quell the dissatisfied public servants. Amongst the actions detailed were the completion of a workshop with union heads in late December 2016, two separate meetings between the Minister of Civil Service, Employment and Housing and the union leaders on 5th and 16th of January; an agreement to amend the pension system; the integration of public sector day labourers into the Public Service; respect of union liberty; and finally to consider revisions to the tax on wages and the national contribution.⁴⁰⁹ The response of the government involved a much longer bureaucratic arrangement that stood in stark contrast to the rapid payments of mutineers. Regardless of the length of time needed for systemic change, the union strikers were most enraged by the speed in which the mutineers were paid, while their own grievances spanned many months.

The minimal interest in the worker's union's strikes, was highly criticised within the broader Ivoirian society, as it signalled to many that the government prioritised a strategy of rapid financial appeasement to a single demographic of the population wielding guns. Editorials, opinion pieces, and other articles also questioned the priorities of the government, further casting doubt on the validity of the mutineers' claims, as though they were empty without weapons. The rapid pay-out of the mutineers demonstrated, in the eyes of many Ivoirians, an unspoken policy of appeasing the ruling regime's own political and demographic base, thus further reinforcing the notion that political opportunities belonged to some, but not all, under the new post-conflict regime. The image

⁴⁰⁸"Communiqué du gouvernement relatif aux revendications syndicales des fonctionnaires," the Minister of Public Service and Modernization of the Administration, January 22, 2017, <http://news.abidjan.net/h/608248.html>.

⁴⁰⁹"Communiqué du gouvernement relatif aux revendications syndicales des fonctionnaires," the Minister of Public Service and Modernization of the Administration.

below, taken from Abidjan's satirical weekly journal, captures the public perceptions of the mutineers and strikers.



Image 6.1: Cover page of *Gbich*, weekly satirical magazine, January 12-18, 2017. Source, *Gbich* newspaper, hard copy.⁴¹⁰

Although calm was eventually re-established, and the country resumed its normal daily functions, the peace was once again interrupted in May 2017. On May 11th, 2017, a member of the FACI, Sargent Fofana, addressed the nation, allegedly speaking on behalf of the 8,400 FN soldiers and those that participated in the mutinies. Over national television, Sargent Fofana announced that the mutineers would not resume their campaign and that they renounced their remaining payments. This proclamation took place during a ceremony involving the president Alassane Ouattara, with the alleged spokesperson surrounded by approximately 40 military peers.⁴¹¹ The following day, on the 12th of May, a segment of the FACI blocked entry and exit points of

⁴¹⁰ *Gbich* Magazine, no. 097, January 12-18, 2017, in print.

⁴¹¹ "Côte d'Ivoire: les soldats mutins continuent de réclamer leurs primes," *Agence France Presse*, May 15, 2017, [HTTP://NEWS.ABIDJAN.NET/H/615077.HTML](http://news.abidjan.net/h/615077.html).

Abidjan and Bouaké, fired intermittent shots, and demanded their outstanding payment as agreed in January. Of the 12 million F CFA agreed upon in the January deal, 5 million F CFA had already been paid, with 7 million remaining.

In response to the new wave of disorder in Abidjan and Bouaké, the National Security Council, the highest office of national security, authorised the deployment of Special Forces and the Republican Guard to re-establish order. Additionally, the regime sent a delegation of high-ranking military officials, including four former ComZones to meet with representatives of the revived mutiny in Bouaké. The number of former ComZones appearing in negotiations had dramatically increased from the January mutiny, from one to four. The increased presence of the former ComZones further suggested that the government lacked the authority and influence necessary to negotiate with the mutineers. The increased presence of the ComZones at the negotiating table moreover suggested where authority and influence actually lay. Like the first mutiny, Issiaka Ouattara (“Wattao”) was present, this time accompanied by former ComZones Cherif Ousmane, Koné Zakaria, and Hervé Touré.⁴¹²

On the 13th of May, as a result of the popular public denunciation of the tactics of the mutineers, an sms circulated amongst Ivoirians calling for a civilian-led protest against the mutineers and their continued obstruction of daily economic activities. The protest was to start at 7:00 a.m. around a central roundabout in Bouaké. The mutineers, in turn, responded the following morning by firing warning shots into the air, eventually leading to the death of two civilians. In an additional spin of events, further adding to the complexity of the crisis, a new weapons cache was revealed, suspiciously at the same time as the ammunition stocks of the mutineers were running low. The cache was discovered on the 14th May, when the mutineers received an anonymous call explaining where they could replenish their stocks - the Bouaké residence of the Director of Protocol for President of the National Assembly, Guillaume Soro.⁴¹³ Souleymane Kamagate Kone (alias “Soul to Soul”), was arrested

⁴¹² Hervieu, “Côte d’Ivoire.”

⁴¹³ “Armes découvertes a Bouaké: comment “Soul to Soul” s’est trahi,” *Jeune Afrique*, August 14, 2017, <http://jeuneafrique.com/465790/politique/armes-decouvertes-a-bouake-comment-soul-to-soul-sest-trahi>

following the discovery to weapons, and proclaimed from jail. In an article appearing in *Jeune Afrique*, he stated “I am put into prison because of the weapons that put Alassane Ouattara into power.”⁴¹⁴ This statement drew attention to the tensions between Ouattara and Guillaume Soro, the latter of which retained the loyalty of many of the ComZones, as well as individuals who self-described as FN supporters. To this day, questions surround the weapons cache, the most obvious being what they were doing at a government official’s private residence. Amongst the special forces deployed, international observers and locals alike described their passive stance towards the FN-derived mutineers. While the mutineers fired shots into the air, the troops from the special forces remained reserved off to the sides. The passive stance was likely due to the high number of FN soldiers who made up the units of the special forces.⁴¹⁵ The passive stance of the deployed troops combined with the reinforced arsenal of the mutineers tipped the scale in favour of the mutineers, with the Ouattara regime conceding with a vow to pay the balance of the payments that were promised in January. Following the five-day revolt, the Minister of Defence declared that the mutiny of May 2017 resulted in two fatalities and nine injuries.⁴¹⁶

While the second mutiny of May 2017 brought an end to the Integrated FN revolts, it left in its wake a series of secretive scandals and unconfirmed incidents typical of the Ivoirian conflict. For one, the weapons cache in the home of Guillaume Soro’s Director of Protocol was disconcerting, with investigations ongoing during the compilation of this thesis. Questions continue to surround the identity of the individual who informed the mutineers of the weapons cache and why such a heavy supply of arms and ammunition was found at all, let alone why it was found in the house of a prominent member of the post-conflict

⁴¹⁴ Vincent Duhem, “Côte d’Ivoire: Depuis la prison de la MACA, ‘Soul to Soul’ accuse directement Alassane Ouattara,” *Jeune Afrique*, October 11, 2017, <http://www.jeuneafrique.com/482324/politique/cote-divoire-depuis-la-prison-de-la-maca-soul-to-soul-accuse-directement-alassane-ouattara>.

⁴¹⁵ The composition of the Special Forces, while also kept confidential, was triangulated by several sources to be composed mostly, if not exclusively, of Integrated FN soldiers. This information was triangulated from discussions with UN peacekeeping personnel and current serving gendarmes.

⁴¹⁶ Anna Sylvestre-Treoner and Vincent Duhem, “Côte d’Ivoire: retour sur une étrange mutinerie,” *Jeune Afrique*, May 26, 2017, <http://www.jeuneafrique.com/mag/440562/politique/cote-divoire-retour-mutinerie-reussie/>.

regime.⁴¹⁷ Second, is the apparent lack of cohesion between FN supporters who were integrated and those who were demobilised. Amongst the two fatalities, one was, surprisingly, a demobilised FN ex-combatant who took to the streets with a group of FN ex-combatants to make claims of their own. This demobilised FN ex-combatant was fired at by the mutinous soldiers. As justification for their actions, the mutineers accused the demobilised FN ex-combatants of compromising and diluting their mutiny.⁴¹⁸ The third and final question is in regard to the motivation behind Sargent Fofana's renunciation the payments on the 11th of May. Some suggested it was a presidential ploy to halt the payments and to save face by forcing a spokesperson of the mutineers to read a script written by the ruling party.⁴¹⁹ Regardless, the broadcasted message was reminiscent of Houphouët-Boigny's faux plots and subsequent public shaming of the alleged instigators as they ask for pardon.

Despite the emergence of the new scandals mentioned above, both the mutinies of January and May yielded several favourable outcomes for the mutineers and their patrons. On the one hand, the 8,400 mutineers, derived exclusively from the FN rebellion, successfully obtained their 12 million F CFA over two instalments, as stipulated in their first agreement with the regime in January. No other soldiers, notably those previously in the FDS, received payments. In addition, they were also promised an improvement in their living conditions. Of the former ComZones to integrate, at least two individuals were promoted. Issiaka Ouattara (Wattao) was promoted from Deputy Commander to Commander of the Republican Guard, an elite unit within the FACI and Cherif Ousmane was promoted from Second in Command of the Presidential Guard to Commander of the 1st Battalion of Commandos and Paratroopers. Of the eight former ComZones to be integrated into the state armed forces, all had been previously granted the grade of Lieutenant-Colonel, despite popular

⁴¹⁷ An article later published by *Jeune Afrique* suggested it was Souleymane Kamagaté Koné "Soul to Soul" himself that made the call. The reasons why are still unclear. "Armes découvertes à Bouaké: comment "Soul to Soul" s'est trahi," *Jeune Afrique*, August 14, 2017, <http://jeuneafrique.com/465790/politique/armes-decouvertes-a-bouake-comment-soul-to-soul-sest-trahi>.

⁴¹⁸ "Militaires en colère en Côte d'Ivoire: 'Le président a compris'," Radio France International, November 19, 2014: <http://www.rfi.fr/afrique/2min/20141119-militaires-cote-ivoire-ouattara-bakayoko-abidjan-ferkesseougou-khorogo>.

⁴¹⁹ Sylvestre-Treoner and Duhem, "Côte d'Ivoire,"

recognition that not all possessed military knowledge or training before entering the rebellion.⁴²⁰ By many accounts, prior to the FN rebellion, ComZones who with military background served mostly as corporals, with the highest ranking being a Sargent.⁴²¹ The Minister of Defence, Alain Richard Donwahi, was renamed Minister of Water and Forests, after a reshuffling of top government posts on the 19th of July. It is believed that the reason for his sudden change of ministry are related to his inability to quell the mutineer's disruptions. In turn, Hamed Bakayoko, a long-time ally of Alassane Ouattara was appointed Minister of Defence. FACI soldiers who did not engage in mutiny, notably those from FDS, remained in their same positions. The rapid promotions afforded to the former ComZones, combined with the sizeable pay-outs given to the integrated former FN soldiers is a clear demonstration of the regime's continued appeasement towards its own support base and to secure loyal cadres amongst the recently integrated FN combatants.

The phenomenon of regimes offering promotions and privileges to their supporters in the military is not exclusive to Côte d'Ivoire. In post-independence Zimbabwe, special privileges and bonuses have been well documented. In this case, ZANU-PF- aligned veterans secured provisions of land, vehicles, and automatic promotions to ensure their continued allegiance to the party and to prevent possible mutinies.⁴²² Following contentious elections in 1997, in which the opposition was violently suppressed by state forces, large lump-sum payments were made to integrated liberation veterans as well as provisions for the monthly war service pensions. Norma Kriger documents this as one of the periods in which alliances between the military and the ruling ZANU-PF party were reinforced, resulting in a situation in which the military became a critical

⁴²⁰ FN ex-combatant gatekeeper, interview with the author in Abidjan-Yopougon, October 20, 2016, in-person. This claim is unverified, but it nonetheless useful in demonstrating how the ComZones are seen amongst the non-integrated. During the interview, the respondent used the case of Kouakou Fofié, former ComZone of Korhogo, to illustrate how some of the most powerful commanders were not perceived to be real military.

⁴²¹ Aline Leboeuf, "Com'Zones et Armée en Côte d'Ivoire," *Afrique Contemporaine* 3, no. 263-264 (2017) : 258.

⁴²² Godfrey Maringira, "Politics, Privileges, and Loyalty in the Zimbabwean National Army," *African Studies Review* 60, no. 2 (2017): 96.

resource for retaining political power.⁴²³ The promotions and privileges for war veterans, alongside the restrictions in their retirement before periods of elections was, in the case of Zimbabwe, one of the ways that the ZANU-PF effectively secured party loyalty and their political power.⁴²⁴ Observations beyond Zimbabwe similarly indicated that there had been trend of 'privatisation' of military units, loyal to individual political leaders, rather than to the larger state forces or to the state itself.⁴²⁵

An emerging body of research that speaks of comparable trends is that of 'coup-proofing'. Coup-proofing involves a series of strategies employed by political leaders to diminish the risks of a potential coup.⁴²⁶ One such strategy is to build a separate branch of the military with a separate command structure, that remains loyal to the political leader. The creation of what is commonly known as a paramilitary would, in theory, add an additional obstacle to the planning and coordination of a coup, as coup-plotters must consider a confrontation with the paramilitary as well.⁴²⁷ Whether or not strategies of coup-proofing have the desired or inverse effect, coup-proofing "is based on the assumption that leaders will intentionally and knowingly undermine the good of their state in order to increase their chances of retaining their leadership role."⁴²⁸ Without concrete data to document the numbers of new 'loyalist' recruits, arguments of coup-proofing in Côte d'Ivoire are difficult to substantiate. Due to a lack of firm numerical data for Côte d'Ivoire, this thesis is more inclined to associate the trend with patron-client exchanges, as the data provided below demonstrates that soldiers expected a specific return for their involvement in the rebellion, rather than simply being nominated to protect a political leader. In keeping with the analytical lens of patron-client exchanges, this chapter builds

⁴²³ Norma Kriger, "War Veterans: Continuities Between the Past and the Present," *African Studies Quarterly* 7, no. 2-3 (2003): 3-4.

⁴²⁴ Kriger, "War Veterans," 3-4.

⁴²⁵ Dwyer, "Borrowed Scripts," 99.

⁴²⁶ Jun Koga Sudduth, "Coup risk, coup-proofing and leadership survival," *Journal of Peace Research* 54, no. 1, (2017): 3.

⁴²⁷ Tobias Böhmelt and Ulrich Pilster, "The Impact of Institutional Coup-proofing on Coup Attempts and Coup Outcomes," *International Interactions* 41 (2015): 158.

⁴²⁸ Andrew W Bausch, "Coup-proofing and Military Inefficiencies: An Experiment," *International Interactions* 44, no. 1 (2018): 2.

on long-established research such Bratton and Van de Walle's. Their research documents similar trends across the continent and observes how the military has gained prominence in countries characterised by patron-client exchanges, granting it privileged positions within ruling regimes.

To keep the soldiers content and under some semblance of civilian control, rulers granted to individual officers and the military units a generous array of perks, privileges, and rewards, including access to rents and commercial ventures.⁴²⁹

The privileges offered to the select military officers and the elite were usually proportionate to their importance in the previous regimes. In other words, "[t]he more that a ruler relied on coercion, the higher the price the military exacted for its support."⁴³⁰

What is crucial to reinforce in these recent waves of mutiny in Côte d'Ivoire is that the soldiers making claims were representative of only one side of the 11-year crisis. Although FACI is composed of both soldiers from the former FDS structures under Gbagbo's rule and the integrated soldiers of the northern FN rebellion, the claims put forth came only from those aligned to the FN supporters. As explained in a number of interviews with the mutineers appearing in local newspapers, the mutinous soldiers said that they believed they were entitled to a series of arcane promises made by the leadership of the FN rebellion to bolster support for its political victory.⁴³¹ These promises have never been made public to Ivoirians and traces of their existence have been seen by only a handful of international observers, making the validity of the claims nearly impossible to prove. Those from the ranks of the FDS, therefore, have watched the mutiny from the side-lines, rather than taking part and demanding similar payments.⁴³² Appeasements by financial gain and elite

⁴²⁹ Michael Bratton and Nicholas Van De Walle, *Democratic Experiments in Africa: Regime Transitions in Comparative Perspective*, Cambridge Studies in Comparative Politics, 1997: 244.

⁴³⁰ Bratton and Van De Walle, *Democratic Experiments in Africa*, 244.

⁴³¹ "Bouaké/Insurrection armée: un militaire révèle, 'on nous a promis 5 à 9 millions chacun pour enlever Gbagbo du pouvoir'," *LaSynthese.net*, January 6, 2017, <http://lasynthese.net/wordpress/2017/01/06/bouakeinsurrection-armee-un-militaire-revele-on-nous-a-promis-5-a-9-millions-chacun-si-on-enlevait-le-president-gbagbo-du-pouvoir/>.

⁴³² Gbagbo-supporter, interview with the author in Abidjan-Cocody, January 10, 2017, in-person.

promotions exclusively for those who supported the FN rebellion further reinforced the notion that opportunities for pay-outs were reserved for those who supported the Ouattara regime. In this sense, political loyalty to the post-conflict regime became seen as an adequate reason to receive these bonuses, which in turn, influenced whether or not it was worthwhile to engage in the mutinies at all.

Reactions and Replications

Following the financial success of the mutineers, a series of smaller, yet similar revolts happened across the country. Some of them were to show disapproval of the mutinies, while others attempted to replicate them in the hopes of obtaining similar outcomes. Mutinies in Côte d'Ivoire, especially since the end of hostilities in 2011, have been met with increasing resentment and denunciation from civilian populations from both sides of the political divide. To counter the concessions granted to the mutineers, uprisings took place on several levels. This section provides brief descriptions of each of the reactions that followed the mutinies. It examines the outcry voiced by members of civil society, civilian counter-protests in Bouaké, and a revolt from armed corps with traditional loyalties to both Gbagbo. Finally, it also examines the revolt from FN supporters who were integrated into other branches of the armed forces, but who were not taken into consideration for the pay-outs.

In one of the more prominent reactions to the mutinies, civil society questioned the regime's response, highlighting that the payments made had not been planned in any of the legal frameworks surrounding military integration, and questioned the government's priorities in adapting budget lines to accommodate these payments.⁴³³ In an interview appearing in national news outlets, the leader of a national human rights NGO questioned the rapid monetary appeasement, explaining that there was no specific budgetary line

⁴³³ Pierre Adjoumani Kouamé, "Président of *la Ligue ivoirienne des droits de l'Homme (Lidho)*," in an interview made public on January 22, 2017; "Côte d'Ivoire: Les primes versées aux militaires ne sont pas "prévues dans les accords de Ouagadougou," responsable ONG, ITW, January 22, 2017: <http://news.abidjan.net/h/608251.html>.

for the payment of mutineers and that the issue of bonus payments and compensation should be handled more equitably.

Bring five million CFA francs from the state coffers today, the problem of good governance arises. In the budget that was voted, there is no line that says we have to pay the rebels. Where does the money come from? These are questions. We want the executive to tell us where the money came from. Even if we had to pay them, we could stagger this over several years, we would not feel all this wave of discontent.⁴³⁴

Opposition further encompassed groups of civilians across the country, the most notable being in Bouaké, the former headquarters of the FN rebellion. On 13th of January 2017, civilians in Bouaké launched a counter-protest to the mutineers, denouncing their aggressions, the insecurity it caused, and the halt of economic activities in the second biggest city next to Abidjan. These protests were broken up briefly in the morning by state security forces when they fired shots into the air.⁴³⁵ The forces, however, were quickly overpowered by between 300-500 civilians shouting slogans such as “*Liberez Bouaké!*” “*On a faim, on veut travailler!*” Within hours, state forces bolstered their presence, putting an official end to the protest and emptying all streets.⁴³⁶ As captured by a local journalist present at Bouaké, one community member stated the following: “We must bring the revolts of soldiers to an end. We are tired of their disturbances.”⁴³⁷

Beyond these events, daily conversations surrounding the mutinies were fairly resentful, many of which advanced the local stereotypes of the Integrated FN soldiers as illiterate and illogical. This demonstrated a public sentiment that the soldiers had ‘mercenary motives’ rather than genuine concern for the

⁴³⁴ Kouamé, “President of *la Ligue ivoirienne des droits de l’Homme (Lidho)*,”; “Côte d’Ivoire,” responsable ONG, ITW.

⁴³⁵ Although the article does not specify, these are the forces deployed to the scene were presumably a mix of Integrated FN and former FDS.

⁴³⁶ AFP, “Côte d’Ivoire : des militaires dispersent une manifestation en tirant en l’air a Bouaké,” *Abidjan News.net*, January 13, 2017 : <http://news.abidjan.net/h/607760.html>

⁴³⁷ Sanogo, “Mutinerie en Côte d’Ivoire: nouveaux tirs à Bouaké avant la visite du ministre de la Défense.”

country at heart.⁴³⁸ Amongst Gbagbo supporters who remained in the military, the former FDS, significant frustration was expressed about the ex-FN officers when asked about claims-making in general. Prior to the mutinies of 2017, an interview was held with a former FDS soldier who retired with the fall of Gbagbo. In a conversation that pre-dates the mutinies by approximately three months, the respondent gave several explanations as to why the FDS were disgruntled and the FN affiliated ex-combatants, integrated and demobilised, engaged in so much claims-making. His answers ranged from the former FDS not having enough capacity, remaining FDS being stripped of weapons following the crisis, only to regain them gradually over the years,⁴³⁹ to a general lack of understanding amongst the 'illiterates' of the north. Above all, this respondent wished to emphasize the 'clan-like' nature of the army, resulting in the reluctance of ex-FDS soldiers to engage in claims-making the way the Integrated FN did in 2014.

We [ex-FDS], we see a clan-like army. It is a clan-like army. That means that the army is a clan. Voila! We see that it is not a real army, it's a militia that was made official, like a national army. That's all that we see. So us, the ex-FDS, we don't... we see them in another light. We acknowledge them not as the national army, but just as those that are there. We accept this, but we know that it is spoiled. All the corps have been spoiled because they just dumped all those guys in all the corps. In the army, in the gendarmerie, in the police. All those [FN] youth were just dumped into the corps.⁴⁴⁰

As previously mentioned above, both the numbers of those integrated, as well as the total numbers of the FACI have deliberately been kept confidential, making statements such as this difficult to quantify. Nevertheless, the importance of the statement lays in how the Integrated FN are viewed amongst those whose military service pre-dates the crisis. Although this Chapter generally argues against comparisons with coup-proofing, this is one case in which a comparison seems more likely. In some ways, it may reflect local views

⁴³⁸ Gbagbo supporter gatekeeper, interview with the author in Abidjan-Cocody, January 10, 2017, in-person. Similar sentiments were expressed in many informal discussions with Ivoirians from both the public and private sectors.

⁴³⁹ Ivoirian Gendarme, informal discussion with the author, August 25, 2018, online messaging.

⁴⁴⁰ Leader of Abidjan-based Auto Defense Group and former FDS military officer, interview.

that the government is taking action to coup-proof—taking actions to prevent a coup.⁴⁴¹ As outlined above, theories developed around coup-proofing have mainly focused on how to diminish the capacity of armed forces to coordinate and plot,⁴⁴² while others looked into how to diminish the military's willingness to engage in coups ("spoiling").⁴⁴³ Some of the broad strategies identified to diminish the threat of a coup include: the establishment of paramilitary organisations under a different command structure (to serve as rivals and as an additional obstacle should a coup be planned), the frequent rotation of commanders (to ensure one does not get too powerful), and the division of the military into rival branches.⁴⁴⁴ Linking the literature on coup-proofing with the Ivorian case, the statement above could be seen as a local interpretation of one of the coup-proofing strategies—that of creating a parallel structure staked with loyalists to prevent a coup. The former FDS officer cited above made use of the words 'militia' to describe the newly integrated FN fighters, which is interesting given that the term "militia" in the Ivorian case is usually applied to Gbagbo's parallel forces in the south. The respondent, as a critic of Ouattara and the post-conflict regime, chose to describe the FN as Ouattara's militia. Following this logic, the mass integration of the FN into the national army could, very well, be seen as the creation of a paramilitary structure to protect against any future waves of revolt against the post-conflict regime. As demonstrated by the mutinies, however, revolt came from those considered to be loyalists. If the integration of the FN was a form of coup-proofing, it is proven to have backfired. While the statement provided above could be seen as a local interpretation of staking a military with loyal supporters to prevent a coup, this thesis is more inclined to see it as providing your support base with a facilitated entry into a

⁴⁴¹ J.T. Quinlivan "Coup-Proofing: Its Practice and Consequences in the Middle East," *International Security* 24, no. 2, (1999): 133.

⁴⁴² Aaron Belkin and Evan Schofer, "Toward a structural understanding of coup risk," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 47, no. 5 (2003): 594-620.

⁴⁴³ For research of coup-spoiling, see Samuel P. Huntington, *The Third Wave* (Norman Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1999), and Peter Feaver, "Civil-Military Relations," *Annual Review of Political Science* 2, no. 1 (1999): 211-241. Feaver argued that 'spoiling' through increased concessions ultimately made soldiers more capable of carrying out a coup as they would have more resources to stage the coup with.

⁴⁴⁴ Jun Koga Sudduth, "Coup risk, coup-proofing, and leader survival," *Journal of Peace Research* 54, no. 1 (2017): 3.

salaried position regardless of whether they buy-in to the concept of national state security.

In the same conversation, the former FDS respondent explained his belief that the high-risk claims-making behaviour of the Integrated FN officers was due to a lack of training and comprehension.

They received some training, but it was never fully realised. They always told themselves that the pro-Gbagbos would come and attack, overthrow them. So they didn't really have the time to fully train them. And, it's the FDS that have to train them. So you see how the training will go—you, my enemy of yesterday, now I have to train you. Voila! That's what it is!⁴⁴⁵

Explaining further, a key representative from the FPI party (Affi camp), who served many years alongside Gbagbo, described the new national army as the regime's attempt to empower rebels coming from outside Côte d'Ivoire and who did not have much formal education. In his explanation, they turned into the veritable "spinal cord" of the current armed force structures.⁴⁴⁶ For this respondent, many northerners did not originally have interest in participating in the rebellion, so incentives had to be introduced to prompt even those from neighbouring countries to participate.⁴⁴⁷ The incentives, in this explanation, were eventual citizenship and guarantee salary from integration into the Ivoirian armed forces.⁴⁴⁸

In addition to the public backlash, was also a series of smaller revolts triggered amongst various armed corps, both in opposition to the pay-outs and for the extension of them. One such incident occurred on the 17th of January 2017, when several gendarmes fired shots into the air in the cities of Daloa, Man, and Yamoussoukro, the first two of which are traditional strongholds of Gbagbo. The reactionary revolt centred on the Zambakro barracks, located just

⁴⁴⁵ Leader of Abidjan-based Auto Defense Group and former FDS military officer, interview.

⁴⁴⁶ FPI Youth Leader (Affi), discussion with the author in Abidjan, June 26, 2017, in-person.

⁴⁴⁷ FPI Youth Leader (Affi), discussion with the author in Abidjan, June 26, 2017, in-person.

⁴⁴⁸ This claim is somewhat reinforced by a recent article appearing in *Jeune Afrique*, where high level military personnel from Bouake describe to the interviewers how biometric training had been introduced in 2017 to help identify any duplicate names as well as non-Ivoirians who integrated that national armed forces. See Vincent Duhem, "Côte d'Ivoire: le casse-tête sécuritaire de Bouaké," *Jeune Afrique*, May 3, 2018, <http://www.jeuneafrique.com/mag/553240/politique/cote-divoire-le-casse-tete-securitaire-de-bouake/>.

outside of the symbolic government capital of Yamoussoukro, and involved disgruntled soldiers and gendarmes not from the FN, who did not benefit from the pay-outs. These uniformed personnel drove around in pick-up trucks and disturbed local populations by firing shots into the air, and, by some accounts, harassed civilian populations and stole from vehicles.⁴⁴⁹ The incident was reported to have started only hours after the government began to pay the first instalment of compensation money to the 8,400 integrated FN mutineers.⁴⁵⁰ In one account given by an FN mutineer who had gone to the bank to collect his pay-out, the gendarmes were trying to intimidate the former FN. The following quotation, taken from a local newspaper, gives significant insight into the tensions between those who received a pay-out and those who did not.

We [integrated FN] were in the bank to take out money and they [gendarmes] come to shoot everywhere and scare people. The banks closed while everyone [former FN] has not yet been paid. [...] Until we get paid, whoever fires a shot in the air will find us on his way back.⁴⁵¹

In a second local newspaper article appearing on the same day, those firing the shots were not considered to be FN supporters and were revolting against the favourable treatment given to former FAFN fighters. They too, wanted compensation for their efforts made during the crisis.⁴⁵² The successes of the mutinies in getting their pay-outs was a significant event that, consequently, triggered small copy-cat events.

Beyond opposition to the pay-outs, other small-scale revolts occurred amongst those who wanted to make similar claims. On the 19th of January 2017, for instance, a small group of Integrated FN penitentiary guards started their own revolt inside of the main prison in Bouaké, *La Maison d'Arret et de*

⁴⁴⁹ "Côte d'Ivoire: nouvelle colère de militaires qui tirent en l'air dans plusieurs villes," *AFP*, January 17, 2017, <http://news.abidjan.net/h/607996.html>.

⁴⁵⁰ "UPDATE 1- Ivory Coast gendarmes fire into the air in several cities," *African Reuters*, January 17, 2017, <http://af.reuters.com/article/ivoryCoastNews/idAFL5N1F745G?sp=true>.

⁴⁵¹ *AFP*, "Cote d'Ivoire: Nouvelle colère de militaires qui tirent en l'air dans plusieurs villes," *abidjan.net*, January 17, 2017, <http://news.abidjan.net/h/607996.html>.

⁴⁵² "UPDATE 1," *African Reuters*.

*Correction de Bouaké.*⁴⁵³ The guards were in revolt on account of their exclusion from the financial deal won by the 8,400 Integrated FN soldiers who launched their mutiny shortly before. To quell the revolt, the military was sent in, resulting in a clash that left three guards wounded and allowed three prisoners to escape. Additionally, accusations were made by the penitentiary guards that six heavy weapons belonging to them were seized and two guards were taken by the military. The spokesperson for the penitentiary guards of Bouaké stated this in a newspaper article reported by AFP.

We are frustrated to have not been taken into account in this deal as we have fought in the post-electoral crisis of 2011 as much as those who have been taken into account. [...] After the war, we accepted to be demobilised and to be reinserted into different corps, including into Customs, the Penitentiary, Water and Forests, the Police, and into the Gendarmerie, so we do not understand this situation of double standards.⁴⁵⁴

According to the spokesperson, an additional 5,500 individuals should have received the same compensation as the mutinous soldiers did, if one were to take into account the true number of integrated FN across the different armed corps.⁴⁵⁵

Following the wave of copy-cat claims-making actions amongst those in the Ivoirian armed forces, the Government felt compelled to explain their position. In a public statement made on 18 January 2017, the spokesperson for the government, Bruno Koné, explained that the payment was strictly for those ex-FAFN fighters who were involved in securing the north and the exit from crisis between the dates of 2007 – 2011. These soldiers, he explained, had not received salaries or bonuses during their service to the northern rebellion. To reassure the rest of the corps, the spokesperson assured that measures were

⁴⁵³ Sia Kambou, "Au moins 3 blessés et 3 détenus en fuite après des heurts entre militaires et gardes pénitentiaires à Bouaké," AFP, January 19, 2017, <http://news.abidjan.net/h/608104.html>.

⁴⁵⁴ Kambou, "Au moins 3 blessés et 3 détenus en fuite après des heurts entre militaires et gardes pénitentiaires à Bouaké."

⁴⁵⁵ Kambou, "Au moins 3 blessés et 3 détenus en fuite après des heurts entre militaires et gardes pénitentiaires à Bouaké."

in place to improve their living conditions, without going into details of when and how living conditions would be improved.⁴⁵⁶

As this section demonstrates, the success of the mutinies consequently resulted in a counter-protest by outraged civilians and a series of copy-cat revolts by members of the armed forces, resulting in brief episodes of instability. The levels of outrage over the mutinies and their pay-outs can be linked to the precedence of their continued use as a tactic. The following section outlines the historical patterns of mutiny and demonstrates how the appeasement of each likely contributed to its continued use in the post-conflict period.

Historical Continuities in Mutiny

Dating back to the final years of Houphouët-Boigny's rule to the 2017 mutinies, Ivorian armed forces have repeatedly used mutiny as a form of political engagement to advance their financial and material interests. The analysis of the last 30 years of mutiny further demonstrates that tactics were repeated while demands increased exponentially.

For soldiers with ties to the FN rebellion, the mutinies of January and May 2017 were not the first. During the 1980's and 1990's, mutineer demands were appeased by Houphouët-Boigny in a context of economic austerity measures, cuts in military spending, and redefined bilateral defence agreement with France that placed responsibility to quell domestic unrest on the Ivorian state.⁴⁵⁷ In May 1990, a relatively small group of approximately 100 soldiers demanded to meet with the President while attempting to take over a state-run radio station. In response, Houphouët-Boigny promised higher salaries and an improvement in living conditions. Shortly after, similar demands were raised by members of the Air Force, who increased the stakes by making use of semi-

⁴⁵⁶ D. Tagro, "Grogne des soldats: le paiement de primes concerne les ex-FAFN n'ayant reçu ni primes ni salaires de 2007 à 2011, précise le gouvernement," Abidjan.net, January 18, 2017, <http://news.abidjan.net/h/608052.html>.

⁴⁵⁷ Dwyer, "Borrowed Scripts," 102.

automatic weapons to take control over the national airport's tower and terminal building.⁴⁵⁸

On 4-5 July 2000, soldiers at the Akouédo camp in Abidjan, generally thought to be those that would go on to form the FN,⁴⁵⁹ took to the streets to demand back pay, firing intermittent shots into the air. This back pay was allegedly for their roles during the December 1999 coup that brought General Robert Guéï to power.⁴⁶⁰ After two days of mutiny, the soldiers returned to their barracks with the promise of obtaining 6 million F CFA (approximately £ 8,000 in 1999 rates), to be released before the end of the transitional government. Similarly, on the 18th of November 2014, soldiers with the same FN allegiance raised barricades and blocked streets in several main cities to protest against unpaid benefits relating to their roles in the FN rebellion.⁴⁶¹ They made claims that totalled 5 million F CFA (approximately £ 6,700) in back-pay for their roles in supporting the FN rebellion between the 1st of January 2009 and June 2011.⁴⁶² Interestingly, the revolting soldiers insisted that the episode was not a mutiny but a practice of “*revendication*”, which roughly translates into ‘claims-making’.⁴⁶³ In response, then Minister of the Interior, and recently promoted Minister of Defence following the 2017 mutinies, Hamed Bakayoko, welcomed the nuance specified by the claims-makers, all the while reassuring them that they were heard and that their concerns would be addressed. In an interview appearing in national newspapers, Hamed Bakayoko expressed the following.

What do I want to say to young people? You spoke, the President understood, he gave instructions to parliament to solve your problem. As we say here in Africa: when you're right, do not spoil your reason. I ask them to stay as they have been: reasonable.

⁴⁵⁸ Dwyer “Borrowed Scripts,” 106.

⁴⁵⁹ *Africa Research Bulletin* 37, no. 9, (October 2000): 14122.

⁴⁶⁰ *Africa Research Bulletin* 37, no. 9, (October 2000): 14031.

⁴⁶¹ “Final report of the Group of Experts on Côte d'Ivoire pursuant to paragraph 27 of Security Council resolution 2153 (2014),” United Nations, S/2015/252, 16.

⁴⁶² “Mutinerie de FRCI: “Ne gaspillez jamais une bonne crise,” Abidjan.net, November 19, 2014, [HTTP://NEWS.ABIDJAN.NET/H/516156.HTML](http://news.abidjan.net/H/516156.HTML).

⁴⁶³ “Militaires en colère en Côte d'Ivoire,” Radio France International.

We have started specific discussions on the implementation modalities.⁴⁶⁴

Unofficial sources confirm that those staking claims each received a pay-out of several million F CFA. As observed in 2017, despite the same claims of service to the FN, the demands for financial and material compensation increased since the previous waves of claims elaborated above. In addition to the payment of larger bonuses, villa houses, and demands for quicker military promotions, the mutineers of 2017 made claims for an ECOMOG bonus, allegedly for the roles that the FN soldiers played in removing Gbagbo from power, in the place of the ECOMOG forces that otherwise would have been deployed. The explanation, while unfounded, was generally presented to the Ivoirian population in similar ways to the one below.

The soldiers are saying that during the post-electoral crisis, it was announced that the forces of ECOWAS would arrive to remove Gbagbo. And finally, these forces did not come, making it them that did the work. They are making claims for the money that, according to them, would have been given to the soldiers of ECOMOG.⁴⁶⁵

Allegedly having performed the work of ECOMOG, the 8,400 soldiers asked that they be paid the salaries that would have otherwise been given by the Ivoirian state to the regional troops.

As evident across time, dating back to the final years of Houphouët-Boigny's rule, to the 2017 mutinies, Ivoirian armed forces have successfully utilised mutiny as a form of political engagement to advance their financial and material interests. The analysis of the last 30 years of mutiny further demonstrates that tactics were repeated while demands increased exponentially. From 2000 onwards, mutinies were carried out nearly exclusively by the FN supporters who went on to launch the rebellion, become ComZones, and most recently, use their elite positions within the armed forces to negotiate a deal with new waves of FN-derived mutineers. This indicates that there is a sizeable faction within the military, with political affinities to the Ouattara regime,

⁴⁶⁴ "Militaires en colère en Côte d'Ivoire," Radio France International.

⁴⁶⁵ "L'Origine de la prime 'ECOMOG'," L'Eléphant Déchaîné N.517, February 3-6, 2017.

that is prepared to use mutiny to make demands for their own welfare, regardless of whether their peers are considered. It equally demonstrates that this group has historically gained concessions from the government following the onset of instability in Côte d'Ivoire in the early 2000s.

Military Integration: A 'Good' for Continued Redistribution

As demonstrated above, the FN supporters who have been integrated into the armed forces have prioritised the method of mutiny as political engagement. This thesis posits that, having been integrated into the formal state structures, their proximity and continued allegiance to the former ComZones, and powerful political figures such as Guillaume Soro and Ouattara, greatly increases their bargaining power. While it would be simple to argue that mere access to weapons and military knowledge increased their chances of success, what is exceptional about the post-conflict Ivoirian military is that only a certain group with specific political loyalties used these means. Both the mutinies of January and May 2017 serve as examples of political engagement activities for those who consider themselves to be victors and who have the closest proximity to individuals of influence. In both cases, just as in 2014, the ruling regime chose a strategy of appeasement, paying out those who presented the biggest threat to post-conflict peace and security. Despite the terms of the deal being relatively clear to civilian audiences, past claims-making activities such as the one of 2014 and those prior to the 11-year political crisis have been masked and kept undisclosed from the rest of society.

The arcane deals that resulted from revolting military personnel in Côte d'Ivoire have repeatedly tipped the scales in their favour, creating a negative image of the Ivoirian military amongst civilian populations. As previously mentioned, many have come to see a large portion of the armed forces, particularly those who were involved in the FN rebellion, as undisciplined, illogical, and primarily concerned with their own monetary gain rather than with the protection of the state. The local perception of these ex-FN soldiers and

officers as mercenaries has subsequently nurtured a feeling of resentment and annoyance whenever there is a revolt for more pay-outs. These feelings are further compounded by the widespread belief that most of those who benefitted from the FN-integration may not have played as significant roles in the conflict as they have claimed. In numerous interviews with ex-demobilised FN fighters, Gbagbo supporters, university professors, and community youth, there is an overwhelming belief that many had used their personal relations or had paid a bribe to be part of the mass integration that followed the post-electoral crisis in 2011. In a group interview with two individuals who consider themselves FN-trained ex-combatants from the EFA sub-group (discussed in Chapter 7) but had not benefitted from integration, two paths to incorporation in the military were believed to exist: personal connections and bribes. For these individuals, personal connections, whether familial or through friendship were the primary way of getting integrated, allowing individuals to buy their way in at a lower price and through instalments. The second way was that of the “*payment de poche*”, which was reserved for those who did not have the right friends or family members in positions of authority.⁴⁶⁶

The belief that after the crisis, familial ties played a significant role in integration is widespread. A young security guard who wanted to enter the armed forces but had been unsuccessful explained the following.

It's the government that determines the number of recruits each year. But it's not as simple as that to enter, because you need to know the right people—somebody who is already there and who can put your name on the list of those who will enter. Even more in Côte d'Ivoire, there is corruption. If you don't have money today, you cannot enter the army, or even get a job, despite the qualifications you have.⁴⁶⁷

When asked if he believed that this applied only to army integration or if it held true for integration into the other corps, he exclaimed that all areas have an element of corruption to them.

⁴⁶⁶ FN supporters self-proclaimed EFA fighters, group discussion with the author in Abidjan-Attécoubé, December 23, 2016, in-person.

⁴⁶⁷ Security Guard, Abidjan-II Plateaux, interview with the author, August 10, 2016, in-person.

Yes! It's the same with the gendarmerie today. If you don't have 1 - 2 million [F CFA, approximately £1,300 – 2,600], you can't. You can't enter the gendarmerie. For the police, at least 1.5 million. Customs—don't even bother—it's reserved. You need your father to work here or that he has a connection at the very least. All the examinations have become rigged, it's difficult. Today, if you are the son of a poor man, you are destined to become a simple guard or somebody who sells SIM cards just to feed your family.⁴⁶⁸

Similarly, in a long discussion with an Ivoirian professor, a snapshot was presented of how he saw the whole integration process unfolding.

Let me explain to you how it works in Côte d'Ivoire. It's simple. Here, when you are a Chief, and you need to do a recruitment, first, there is corruption. So, what does he do? First, he takes some of his friends that fought with him. Then those who were not taken into account start to complain that [the Chief] has taken his parents, friends, those who were here, those who went to school with him, there is your opportunity to enter into the army. So, we leave behind, in Bouaké, in Korhogo [northern FN centres], we leave them behind and take friends, so it's a mix. There are, at the same time, those who really fought, and those who did not. There were those that were in school here when the regime changed, and if they had a cousin who was Minister of Defence, who signs him up, who integrates him, n'est-ce pas? So, when you look at them [claims-makers], you should not confuse those that fought with those that did not. You must consider the context as well—a country exiting a crisis with high unemployment.⁴⁶⁹

In the above quotation, the professor brought up an important point. That is, in the larger context of unemployment, military integration takes on a broader meaning amongst much of the local population. For many, particularly youth who are unemployed or unsatisfied with their work, military integration represents a way of getting a good salary and the occasional large pay-out. In a context of significant youth unemployment, where the most accessible employment opportunities are provided through the informal economy, earning

⁴⁶⁸ Security Guard, Abidjan-II Plateaux, interview with the author, August 10, 2016, in-person.

⁴⁶⁹ Professor University Houphouët-Boigny, interview with the author in Abidjan-II Plateaux, August 12, 2016, in-person.

a stable and sufficient wage for one's family is a daunting task for both recently graduated and non-educated youth alike. In a discussion with the same guard mentioned above and who worked seven days a week, 24-hours a day,⁴⁷⁰ for roughly 10,000 F CFA a week (approximately £13), the topic of armed forces integration came up. Repeatedly, the young man made personal pleas that he connected to officials from the Etat Major, in the hopes that he could convince them to recruit him. This young man laid out a condition that was not only his situation, but also reminiscent of the professor's opinion, and rings true for many youths trying to earn a living.

It's that here, in Côte d'Ivoire, it's difficult to gain employment. In Côte d'Ivoire, here, if you don't already have means or a good connection, it's very very difficult, even [if you are university educated], to get work. This is what makes many of them go to the army, to become a military to try and earn your bread. Imagine that you a family of five. The first one, maybe because of small funds, was able to go to school, and got a BPC. The father can no longer afford to pay the tuition, so he must drop out and try to succeed in the [integration examinations for military, public service, each year]. To get in, you need connections.⁴⁷¹

Further elaborating, this young respondent brought up the competition for spots in prestigious post-secondary programmes against those with means. In his view, the integration into the armed forces was the only alternative.

The exam for ENAP [National administration Programme]. Perhaps each year they take a dozen students in Côte d'Ivoire? What will that do? There are how many Ministers with children? So, it makes [a situation] where the spots are already reserved. So, this is another factor that makes it difficult for youth in Côte d'Ivoire to get jobs. Everybody has understood that at least you can try to enter into the army.⁴⁷²

⁴⁷⁰ This guard worked in the building I lived in and confirmed that he worked alone and would be replaced by another young man every second week. Neither were given mattresses to sleep on, and had pillows stripped away. Working conditions such as these further demonstrate the desperation of Ivoirian youth to earn a meagre salary.

⁴⁷¹ Security Guard, Abidjan-II Plateaux, interview with the author, August 10, 2016, in-person.

⁴⁷² Security Guard, Abidjan-II Plateaux, interview with the author, August 10, 2016, in-person.

The discussion held with the security guard was then raised again with the Ivoirian professor who shed light on the guard's plight by presenting a hypothetical situation.

So, he does the training, and he enters as a non-commissioned officer at the very least. He gets a salary, voila ! He gets the good treatment, n'est-ce pas? He gets a living allowance, a salary, voila! As he explained to you, he is poor. His parents are in the village and he is in Abidjan. Now he wants to take care of himself so that his parents can breathe a bit. And often, he is not alone, he has many younger brothers and sisters that come. As we say here, 'take care of yourself, find yourself a job, and take control of your life.' So, as he has difficulty finding a job, he hopes to go into the army, hoping that with all his qualifications [bachelor degree in geography], he will become an Officer at the very least.⁴⁷³

For many, integration into the armed forces was less about a lifelong commitment to the interests of the state, to a life of discipline and personal sacrifice, but was rather about earning a stable income. This carries an undercurrent that suggests that for many, the biggest obstacles were due to their limited financial means and social networks. The technical skill level required, and the obligations of uniformed service hardly ever factored in to the majority of the respondent's explanations, unless prompted.

The emphasis placed on monetary and social connections leads into the next theme to emerge often in the interviews conducted during this research—the seemingly low standards believed to be applied to post-conflict recruits and integration. This topic was directly brought up in a group discussion with five FN supporters who benefitted neither from integration nor from demobilisation, yet who wore bits and pieces of FACI fatigues and were squatting in a military office that had yet to be repurposed by the state. Amongst the individuals present, there was a loose consensus that military integration had been degraded further since the end of the crisis, with members of the regime

⁴⁷³Professor University Houphouët-Boigny, interview with the author in Abidjan-II Plateaux, August 12, 2016, in-person.

receiving bribes and applying lax standards of integration to those who should not have benefitted.

Before the crisis, to enter the army you would go and sign up at the town hall. You would do two years of training, and you would constantly be under tests to be retained or let go. After the crisis, anything seems to go.⁴⁷⁴

This individual further explained that before the crisis, there were a certain set of standards applied both to recruitment and to retention in the various corps. For individuals wishing to serve, tests were completed, training was administered, and, in the event that a soldier exhibited poor performance over a number of years, would eventually be forced into retirement.⁴⁷⁵

Further highlighting the perception that recruitment is now not meritocratic was the third group interview held with six demobilised former FN youth. Throughout the discussion, the youth would bring up, at differing times, statements that reflected their thoughts on integration. At one point, one youth argued the opposite of what the previous group said, explaining that integration recruitment started as open to everyone, but that as time went on a minimum standard of education was enforced. For this individual, this standard resulted in many youths being left out of the army, that should have been integrated because of their military know-how acquired during the conflict.⁴⁷⁶ As the explanation continued, the group of youths began to describe a wartime situation that was neither factual or reflective of what had happened. Collectively, they described a war with large amounts of bloodshed, with endless combat, and recruitment styles that are more reflective of more extreme cases of civil war in West Africa which frequently forced the recruitment of child soldiers. Their narrative could not have been true. For one, their ages meant that they would have been between eight and ten years old at the time of the FN rebellion. They also lived in Abidjan, making it unlikely that they participated in the northern rebellion north of the demarcation line. Furthermore, they were residents of a neighbourhood that had not experienced much

⁴⁷⁴ FN-loyalists/*Jeunes Associés*, group interview with the author Abidjan-Attécoubé, December 27, 2016, in-person.

⁴⁷⁵ FN-loyalists/*Jeunes Associés*, group interview with the author Abidjan-Attécoubé, December 27, 2016, in-person.

⁴⁷⁶ Demobilised FN youth, group discussion with the author in Abidjan-Port Bouët, December 28, 2016, in-person.

violence in the post-electoral crisis, nor was it targeted during the many inter-ethnic confrontations between 2000-2011. Furthermore, education systems remained in-tact in the south. Despite these facts, one of the youths in the group went on to explain that during the 11-year crisis, it was impossible to get an education, because the country was at war—a statement that runs counter to previous descriptions of the crisis from both academic and first-hand accounts. These youths continued to describe a conflict that left the country in tatters and described ex-combatant experiences more in tune with experiences in Sierra Leone and Liberia.⁴⁷⁷ The issue of unemployment and the precarious situation of Ivoirian youth was raised several times in daily conversations. In one discussion, the Ivoirian professor frequently consulted discussed the possible appeal of integration amongst FN-sympathising youth who find themselves in precarious financial situations. Although describing the situation of FN youth in particular, the analysis extends to youth in general, despite calls for open integration coming exclusively from the FN-affiliated groups.

Amongst the FN, there are many illiterates. They did not go to school. To them, the army is a way of earning money. They earn a salary, they are fed in the camp, they get medical treatment when they are sick, and they have a bit of pocket money. On the streets, he is a little bandit, he might get one euro a day to eat, but in the army, he earns 100,000 F CFA. Therefore, the army is a form of social mobility. If he is a rank and file soldier, if he is strong, and rigorous, he might get noticed and tomorrow become the guard of a Minister. Things change. He will be with the Minister all the time, things change. He is no longer a rank-and-file, n'est-ce-pas? He will sometimes get bonuses, have facilitated entry. So, the army is then a form of social promotion for those willing to work. It's unemployment that creates this situation [mass appeal of army integration amongst financially unstable].⁴⁷⁸

⁴⁷⁷ Demobilised FN youth, group discussion with the author in Abidjan-Port Bouët, December 28, 2016, in-person.

Themes such as these were used by the group of youth to reinforce the notion that they had been left behind and did not possess the power that they believed they would obtain with their official ex-combatant status cards. This topic is explored in Chapter 7.

⁴⁷⁸ Professor University Houphouët-Boigny, interview with the author in Abidjan-II Plateaux, August 12, 2016, in-person.

The reasons presented above describe the appeal that army integration has for the unemployed or for youth with a bleak financial future. They perceive an easier lifestyle, combined with the ability to make significant financial gains through mutiny or other forms of claims-making arguably showcases armed force integration an efficient and effective vehicle to advance one's stature in society. Rather than being seen as an institution where all activities operate under a single command, where the place of residence is the same as work, where individuals are largely separated from society, and live collectively a formally administered and enclosed life,⁴⁷⁹ obtaining a military post is seen more as a good to be distributed to those who demonstrate political loyalty to the regime—not the state. This finding reflects the ways in which recruitment occurred under the successive regimes of Bédié, Guéï, and Gbagbo leading into the crisis, and further demonstrates how Ivoirians have come to expect the continuation of similar policies. Furthermore, traditional conceptions of military service demand that the personal political preferences of soldiers are kept private and their actions devoid of political leanings.⁴⁸⁰ In the interpretation of many disenfranchised youth, it was the opposite- it was a good of distribution that was dependent on political allegiance.

Conclusion: Reinforcing Expectations

As the mutinies of January and May 2017 demonstrate, military integration carries with it strong bargaining power. As a result of integration, individuals are seen to be closer to the 'inside track', holding official positions within the state institutions that are capable of distributing resources. Moreover, it formalises the ties between the integrated and their former patrons, the ComZones, many of whom also gained high-ranking posts in the armed forces

⁴⁷⁹ Godfrey Maringira and Lorena Nunez Carrasco, "Once a Soldier, a Soldier Forever': Exiled Zimbabwean Soldiers in South Africa," *Medical Anthropology* 34, no. 4 (2015): 323.

⁴⁸⁰ Maringira, "Politics, Privileges, and Loyalty in the Zimbabwean National Army," 95. Maringira refers to Samuel Huntington's 1957 conception of professional military corps, as appearing in Samuel P. Huntington, *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-military Relations* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1957).

and in the government. While cases such as Zimbabwe demonstrate how ruling parties have effectively 'captured' the military with privileges and promotions for their political alignment, Côte d'Ivoire demonstrates that although observing the same trend of promotion, it is rather military-driven than initiated from political elites. This finding reinforces Dwyer's argument that mutiny is an effective form of communication with political and military superiors. As such, this thesis classifies it within the realms of political engagement.

The proximity to former, and perhaps current, patrons was best demonstrated by the presence of the former ComZones at the negotiating table while the mutineers and the Minister of Defence were discussing the terms of an agreement. The presence of the former ComZones illustrates how significant their influence continues to be on the integrated FN fighters, with the regime deeming it appropriate to bring them into the negotiations to bridge the gaps between the government and the mutineers. In this sense, the former ComZones still wield a significant amount of influence over the integrated FN, despite the latter falling under slightly altered chains of command within an integrated military apparatus.⁴⁸¹ The presence of the ComZones may have also demonstrated the weak degrees of authority that the Minister himself held over the mutineers. Contrary to the Gbagbo supporters, the loyalties of the integrated FN fighters are not to a sole individual through national level political party identities. The Integrated FN made their pleas directly to the president, Alassane Ouattara, and were pacified by their former ComZone commanders. The demands made, reinforce this thesis' main argument that clientelistic practices prevail in such situations. In this situation, actors from one political *tendance* had to engage directly with their political support base, based solely on past promises of favourable treatment in exchange for their loyalty. The practices of clientelism in this in the case of the integrated FN, has been driven both from the top as it has from the bottom; while the regime has been distributing opportunities and concessions to the military with favouritism for ex-FN soldiers and other well-connected individuals who could pay their way in,

⁴⁸¹ Aline Leboeuf, "Com'Zones et Armée en Côte d'Ivoire," *Afrique Contemporaine* 3, no. 263-264 (2017): 258.

clientelism was equally driven from the bottom-up, through the expectations of rewards and payments for continued loyalty.

As the preceding sections have demonstrated, the Ivorian armed forces have repeatedly resorted to mutiny and similar revolts, violent and non-violent, to advance their interests. While earlier documentation of mutinies from the 1990s suggests that mutinies were carried out devoid of political inclinations,⁴⁸² more recent instances provide strong evidence of mutiny as increasingly political. Following the 2011 post-electoral crisis, mutineers derived almost exclusively from one political bloc, that of the FN rebellion. By staking claims exclusively to the political elites that they consider to be 'their own', and by influencing the distribution of state funds and military promotions to those who demonstrated past and continued loyalty to the regime, the mutinies of 2017 are inherently political. This trend runs parallel to similar claims of African militaries in the post-colonial period becoming political actors,⁴⁸³ although in slightly different ways than those seen in Zimbabwe, where integrated liberation veterans are used by political elite to maintain political domination.

Establishing that the integrated FN are highly active and effective in their methods of political engagement, builds on evolving research on ex-combatants as political actors, as outlined in Chapter 2.⁴⁸⁴ The political participation of ex-combatants in post-conflict states, however, does not necessarily imply compliance with democratic ideals. Political engagement can also include participation with undemocratic traits such as corruption, authoritarianism, and patrimonial governance. Political engagement of integrated combatants, in this sense, is in some ways mainstreamed if it

⁴⁸² Past records of these early mutinies do not mention any dynamics that could make them politically-driven. Due to the basic descriptions provided of past mutinies, it is possible that political dynamics were overlooked.

⁴⁸³ Maringira, "Politics, Privileges, and Loyalty in the Zimbabwean National Army," 93.

⁴⁸⁴ For literature on rebel group transitions into political parties see: Terrence Lyons, "Victorious rebels and postwar politics," *Civil Wars* 18, no.2, (2016): 160-174; Johanna Söderström, "The Resilient, the Remobilised, and the Removed: Party Mobilisation among Former M19 Combatants," *Civil Wars* 18, no. 2, (2016): 214-233; Gyda Marås Sindre and Johanna Söderström, "Understanding Armed Groups and Party Politics," *Civil Wars* 18, no.2, (2016): 109-117; Terrence Lyons, "The Importance of Winning: Victorious Insurgent Groups and Authoritative Politics," *Comparative Politics* 48, no.2 (2016): 167-184; Jeremy Speight and Katrin Wittig, "Pathways from Rebellion: Rebel-Party Configurations in Côte d'Ivoire and Burundi," *African Affairs* 117, no. 466 (2017): 21-43.

operates on the same terms as the larger polity, for better or for worse.⁴⁸⁵ This chapter extends this analysis to include recently integrated FN combatants, by demonstrating that their claims to their patrons displays clientelistic tendencies, in which claims are made distinctly to elites perceived as 'their own' and often through former direct loyalties to influential individuals such as the Zone Commanders (ComZones). These exchanges reflect both past and current trends in the larger Ivoirian polity.

Perhaps the most important thing that the mutinies of January and May 2017 demonstrate is that the most destabilising spoilers in the post-conflict period were not those excluded from political power, but rather, those most proximate to it. The continued practice of clientelistic governance, in which mutineer clients make bold and highly disruptive demands of their regime patrons, may in and of itself be a mobilising factor for political engagement amongst ex-combatants. In this sense, ex-combatants may consider that it is their time to advance their interests as their own are now in power. The irony is this is that those considered to be the victors, to have had their political desires satisfied, are also those that pose the greatest threat to society. Interestingly, unlike under Gbagbo's rule where Ivoirian supporters came together to voluntarily support the cause, under the present government it appears to be quite the opposite.⁴⁸⁶ Under the current government, the integrated FN soldiers need to be constantly rewarded with material goods or job placements in exchange for their support.⁴⁸⁷ Individuals from this group have effectively leveraged their wartime labels and experiences to call on the president to grant them compensation that they felt due. Nonetheless, the successes of the integrated FN fighters have not been without consequence. Backlash from both their Gbagbo-supporting counterparts in the armed forces as well as from the

⁴⁸⁵ Johanna Söderström "The Political Consequences of Reintegration Programmes in Current Peace-Building: A Framework for Analysis," *Conflict, Security & Development* 13, no. 1 (2013): 92.

⁴⁸⁶ This point was often mentioned in passing by Gbagbo supporters to make clear the differences in origin between Gbagbo supporters and FN affiliated individuals. While Gbagbo built his initial base through the allure of his political ideas (multi-party elections, socialism), popular support built over the years. The FN, on the other hand, as argued by Gbagbo supporters, used promises of material rewards for participation.

⁴⁸⁷ FPI Youth Leader (Affi), discussion with the author in Abidjan, June 26, 2017, in-person.

broader public demonstrates that popular support for their causes is waning. With every public disruption, militarily-integrated former FN soldiers get increasingly branded as mercenaries and as illiterates with little regard or concern for Ivorian national interests.

These observations challenge simplistic perceptions of all ex-combatants to be disgruntled and high-risk individuals if left idle with grievances. As demonstrated above, those combatants derived from the ranks of the FN and who were integrated into the Ivorian armed forces, have in many ways been the most disruptive to society. The increased disruption caused by, and hostility faced by, the Integrated FN demonstrates that political, economic, and social instability can also be derived from those in relatively more stable conditions, that of salaried employment. This finding further opens questions as to whether strong clientelistic ties, act as a catalyst for political claims-making, and in cases where proximity to power is close, to instability. Much of this, however, hinges on the observation that mutineers require military or political leadership that is willing to respond to their grievances.⁴⁸⁸ In the case of the integrated FN fighters, three armed revolts have taken place since 2011, the most recent two of which resulted in civilian casualties, injuries, and a halted economy. This behaviour has already sparked a wave of similar behaviour through reactionary revolts, more of which is elaborated in Chapter 7, and as it has proven to be a very successful strategy, it is not unlikely that it will continue to be employed in the future, the full implications of which are yet to be realised.

⁴⁸⁸ Dwyer, "Borrowed Scripts," 113. While this point was made in specific relation to democratic regimes, which are arguably more likely to willingly listen, the data presented in this chapter argues that willing listeners are also present within clientelistic relations, in which there is a mutual dependency exchange between client and patron.

Chapter 7: Ex-Forces Nouvelles as Demobilised Hopefuls

If those with political patrons in power are more likely to engage in disruptive claims-making, as the previous chapter demonstrated, then this chapter adds further nuance by demonstrating that victors on the fringes of power enjoy less success. This chapter marks the second part of an examination into the political engagement activities of those who consider themselves as ‘victors’ to the 11-year political crisis: the *Forces Nouvelles* (FN) supporters. This chapter, therefore, examines the various forms of claims-making used by FN supporters who were demobilised, and who consider themselves to be ex-combatants regardless of whether they benefitted from a national DDR programme. The term ‘demobilised’ alludes to Ivoirians who refer to themselves as ex-combatants and are no longer members of any armed group but have instead returned to civilian life, with or without compensation. Their demobilisation may have been through formal channels, such as the national DDR programme, or by their own will. The term Demobilised FN, in this chapter, is reserved for those individuals who supported the northern FN rebellion through any of its three wings: military, economic, or political and who self-identify as an ex-combatant from the FN rebellion.

Like the previous chapter, the political engagement activities examined below are those carried out by individuals who are typically aligned to the former rebel leader, and current President of the National Assembly, Guillaume Soro. FN supporters who broke off from the rebellion to follow rival FN leader Ibrahim Coulibaly (alias “IB”), have a unique political trajectory that is examined in Chapter 8. Demobilised FN, therefore, is used as a short-hand indicator of those FN ex-combatants who were demobilised, through an official programme or on their own, and who identify under the pro-Soro wing of the FN. As mentioned in Chapter 6, over time, FN supporters aligned with Soro were observed to engage in claims-making activities, which included mutiny, association-forming, protesting, and individual letter-writing. The claims put forward to the regime centre on military integration, whether being integrated directly into the armed force structures, or for back pay equalling the salaries

that would have been earned had the individual been integrated. Like the FN Integrated, whose political engagement occurred on a much larger, public, and disruptive scale—that of armed mutiny—demobilised FN ex-combatants anticipated favourable treatment from the regime, based on political loyalties professed to Ouattara and the FN rebellion. Unlike the Integrated FN, however, amongst the demobilised, claims-making activities, while occasionally disruptive to society, happened on a smaller scale and were met with little to no success. An ongoing belief that there would eventually be rewards for their political support encouraged the formation and re-formation of claims based on what was perceived to gain the most traction with the regime. Through the data presented below, demobilised FN have organised and participated in various political engagement activities, including protests, association-forming, and individual letter-writing to advance their interests and obtain financial assistance in the post-conflict period. This chapter demonstrates that although the demobilised FN do not have the highest degrees of access to political actors of influence, their political allegiance to the regime and their sense of loyalty to the President nurtured a sense of opportunity for the staking of claims to the post-conflict regime. While less disruptive than the activities of the mutineers, demobilised FN demonstrated continuous efforts to engage with the regime and had a moderate capacity to disrupt peace and stability. Despite sharing the same political loyalties and history of rebellion as those who were granted large concessions, demobilised FN claims-making was rarely successful. This chapter proposes that this lack of success was on account of two primary reasons: a lack of support from their successful integrated peers, and an increasing degree of scepticism from the regime of who fought, who offered support, and who has opportunistic motives.

This chapter looks more deeply into the post-conflict political trajectories of the demobilised FN ex-combatants, while complementing the work presented in the previous chapter. Together, both Chapters 6 and 7 on the FN supporters demonstrate that those who consider themselves the victors, and who are in closer proximity to state actors and institutions of influence, are more politically active than those who consider themselves to have fallen out of

grace, such as the Commando Invisibles (Chapter 8), and those who are in opposition, such as Gbagbo supporters (Chapter 5). This chapter reinforces the thesis's primary argument that claims making is highest amongst Ivoirian ex-combatants who consider 'their own' patrons to be in power and who have the strongest ties to people of influence. Their disruptive forms of political engagement, therefore, are driven in part by their expectations of clientelistic practices of governance to continue in the post-conflict period. This chapter draws from individual and group interviews, documents provided by the respondents themselves, as well as local and international media coverage.

Actor Background: Demobilised FN

Originating from the FN northern rebellion, the demobilised FN are individuals who supported the presidential candidacy of Alassane Ouattara and are largely believed to fall under the pro-Guillaume Soro branch of the rebellion. Amongst those making up the demobilised FN groups, identities related to the conflict centre mostly around participation in the civilian or armed wing of the FN during the territorial split of the country, or during the post-electoral crisis, either through direct battle in Abidjan or in any of the smaller battles in the southwest of the country as the FN descended to take control of Abidjan. For the most part, combatants from this group self-identify as FN supporters, while a handful of sub-groups have also been identified. More importantly are the blurred categories that surround the various sub-groups below. This "murkiness" makes the identities and the claims of participation in the FN rebellion difficult to verify. Oftentimes, respondents will start a discussion pledging membership in one sub-group, while finishing the conversation in a different sub-group. 'Membership'⁴⁸⁹ in many of these sub-groups is likely to be fluid, with individuals moving from one group to another. Of importance is their

⁴⁸⁹ 'Membership' in this chapter is to be understood as a vague and fluid sense of belonging in a group. There were no strict or enforced terms of membership observed within this group during the compilation of this project.

broad allegiance to the FN and to Ouattara's regime, and the loose criteria of what participation in the broader FN rebellion was like.

Two additional groups with specific wartime identity claims within the demobilised FN are the *Jeunes Associés* and the *Ecole des Forces Armées* (EFA) fighters. The *Jeunes Associés* is the government-given name for individuals who were loosely affiliated to the *Forces Républicaines de Côte d'Ivoire* (FRCI)⁴⁹⁰, hoping for integration into the unified state military and paramilitary forces. In one telling, the FRCI and their "Associés" supported official FN fighters, volunteering their support to establish security in Abidjan by filling the void left by Gbagbo's defeated loyalist forces. Between 2011 and 2015, many of the military camps in Abidjan that were previously used as specialised units under Gbagbo's security apparatus were subsequently inhabited by groups of Associés. For others, such as individuals who claim to be from the Commando Invisibles, the origins of the *Jeunes Associés* are unclear, with some respondents describing them as the friends and families of the former ComZones who dwelled in several abandoned military state premises during the post-electoral crisis up until 2015.⁴⁹¹ Regardless of origin, participation amongst the Associés was described by self-identifying claimants to have included anything from voluntarily accompanying soldiers on official missions, voluntary informant services, cleaning communal dwellings, organising other Associés, and cleaning weapons. In one interview, one self-proclaimed leader of one of the *Jeunes Associés* groups described how the Associés would collect conflict-related equipment to convince the authorities of their legitimacy. During the post-electoral crisis, these individuals observed how the attire was to be worn and began to replicate the styles of legitimate state security authorities,⁴⁹² a practice more attuned to mimicking behaviour than to actual participation in the rebellion. Following the post-electoral crisis of 2011,

⁴⁹⁰ Recall- the initial FRCI was the name chosen by the FN fighters as they descended to take control of Abidjan in 2011. This then became the official name of the Ivorian armed forces, replacing the FDS title under Gbagbo's rule. In 2016, the FRCI state forces changed their name to *Forces Armées de Côte d'Ivoire* (FACI).

⁴⁹¹ EFA fighter 3, interview with the author in Abidjan-Attécoubé, December 23, 2016, in-person. Similar events were described informally by an Abidjan-based analyst in early 2017.

⁴⁹² FN ex-combatant gatekeeper, Interview with the author in Abidjan-Yopougon, July 26, 2017, in-person.

Jeunes Associés were still observed to be wearing pieces of army attire as they continued to occupy abandoned state barracks. These efforts, however, were not entirely in vain. In June 2015, the national authorities for Disarmament, Demobilisation, and Reintegration and the FRCI conducted special disarmament and demobilisation operations to remove the *Jeunes Associés* from their camps to reclaim the buildings for their own forces. For their departure, the *Jeunes Associés* were offered entrance into the national DDR programme in lieu of integration into the state forces that officials explained was already at capacity.⁴⁹³

The second sub-group to arise during the fieldwork is that of the EFA fighters. Leading into the 2010 crisis, a group of Abidjan fighters were allegedly trained in Bouaké at the Ecole des Forces Armées (EFA), in support of Guillaume Soro's wing of FN loyalists. According to interviews with two of these self-identifying individuals, participants in the EFA group were trained in tactics such as ambush, as well as in the use of both small arms and heavy weapons.⁴⁹⁴ These select fighters, it was explained, would be used as Abidjan-based reinforcements in the instance that Gbagbo refused to step down from power following the contested 2010 presidential elections.⁴⁹⁵ During interviews, respondents from the EFA sub-group maintained that they had launched the attacks at PK 18, a notorious battlefield during the 2010-11 crisis. Other respondents, however, countered these claims, describing an 'EFA project' that was never fully realised, with most of the people involved sent home without completing their military training. This alternate version stresses that EFA fighters, having limited and unrealised knowledge of combat, returned to Abidjan and took on roles as infiltrators to the Commando Invisibles.⁴⁹⁶

⁴⁹³ Fraternité Matin, "Libération des sites privés et publics: l'armée ivoirienne lance l'opération 'bonheur'," Abidjan.net, April 21, 2015, <http://news.abidjan.net/h/549626.html>; Vincent Duhem, "Côte d'Ivoire: présentez... armes! (et déposez-les!)," Jeune Afrique, June 29, 2015, <http://www.jeuneafrique.com/mag/241347/politique/cote-divoire-presentez-armes-et-deposez-les/>

⁴⁹⁴ EFA fighter 1, Interview with the author in Abidjan-Attécoubé, December 23, 2016, in-person.

⁴⁹⁵ Police Commissioner- Centre National de Sécurité, interview with the author in Abidjan-Plateau, October 25, 2016, in-person.

⁴⁹⁶ The term 'infiltrators' was used by original members of the Commando Invisibles, and was supported by stories told informally by international practitioners. While it is possible that these individuals were simply 'hanging-on' to the

Allegations such as these, presented by self-identifying *Commando Invisibles* and in informal discussions with international practitioners, elucidate a successful group of infiltrators spying on the activities of IB and his fighters and fleeing from outbreaks of violence. The infiltrators, in this version, are believed to be the same individuals who later, in the post-conflict period, presented themselves as the individuals who opened the Abidjan battlefield for the FN rebels to take control of Abidjan—the very role that the *Commando Invisibles* are widely acknowledged to have played in the post-electoral crisis by most Ivoirian and international observers.⁴⁹⁷ EFA group fighters were reported to have been mostly integrated into the state forces, whether by recruitment or bribes, as explained by one EFA fighter who was not integrated but had kept records of those that were.⁴⁹⁸ The remaining EFA fighters, this respondent explained, refrained from the national DDR programme with the expectation that Ouattara's government would rectify the uneven distribution of military posts and would integrate those left out. Should the regime no longer be able to integrate them, the respondent hoped that Ouattara would provide monetary compensation that exceeded the amount given to ex-combatants through the DDR programme.⁴⁹⁹ The claims of EFA fighters paying their way into the armed forces could not be verified, but remains consistent with popular opinion amongst Ivoirians considered to be Gbagbo supporters, *Commando Invisibles*, demobilised FN, and regular civilians. That said, there is likely an element of truth in these allegations, which are frequently used to justify the multiple attempts of demobilised FN ex-combatants to make claims.

Over the course of the conflict, many individuals sought to attach themselves to armed forces both loyal to the northern rebellion and to Gbagbo's state forces, as described in the interviews and in a handful of academic

Commando Invisibles, this thesis uses the terminology of 'infiltrator' as it is consistent with wartime narratives presented in Chapter 8 (*Commando Invisibles*).

⁴⁹⁷ *Commando Invisibles* (Original), group discussion with the author in Abidjan Abobo, October 1, 2016, in-person.

⁴⁹⁸ EFA fighter 1, interview with the author in Abobo-Abidjan, September 26, 2016, in-person. This EFA ex-combatant also provided a list of former EFA fighters, each with a letter next to their name indicating which armed forces structure they were integrated into. The EFA fighter explained and made small marks next to the names of those who allegedly paid state officials to be integrated.

⁴⁹⁹ EFA fighter 1, interview with the author in Abobo-Abidjan, September 26, 2016, in-person.

articles⁵⁰⁰. These individual ‘volunteers’ may or may not have been armed with weapons left behind after a violent confrontation, or with weapons that were donated to the individuals in an informal way. These individuals also collected an array of military attire to ‘play the part’, and in some cases, received basic military training out of the goodwill of a trained security sector officer.⁵⁰¹ Like the case of the *Jeunes Associés*, these individuals often wore partial military attire, attempting to replicate the look of the armed forces as best as they could. In controlled settings, and in some civil wars, access to military attire is controlled, even by militias and other non-state forces seeking to enforce their own orders. The allowance of attire to be collected and worn by individuals with loose ties to the official structures indicates a degree, even if only marginal, of tacit acceptance. In this sense, recipients of these pieces of attire might have been tacitly accepted into the broader structure or the broader movement. The giving of pieces could also be seen as a way of helping those in need. Knowing that financial support and other benefits would likely to be available in the post-conflict period, the act of gifting, or simply allowing, an individual to ‘own’ symbols of combat could be seen as a form of distribution, or a chance of distribution to those in need. This second scenario resonates with an explanation given by a Gbagbo supporter of how the ComZones likely used the national DDR programme as a way of helping those in need.⁵⁰² While it may seem unlikely that pieces of attire would be handed out voluntarily, this thesis argues that it is possible. What this demonstrates, and is of essence for this chapter, is that what constitutes an FN fighter is much broader than a traditional ‘ex-combatant’ with battle-hardened experience.

Adding to these descriptions are those provided by respondents from the État Major and with self-identifying *Jeunes Associés* on the phenomenon of civilian “*rattisage*” (or sweeping) of the streets for any remnants of the war such as loose pieces of ammunition, weapons magazines, or other bits of lose

⁵⁰⁰ The most detailed reference to the phenomena of volunteers and their tactics of assimilation are provided in: Karel Arnaut, “Corps habillés, Nouchis and subaltern bigmanity in Côte d'Ivoire,” *African conflicts and informal power: Big men and networks*, ed. Mats Utas (London: Zed Books, 2012), 78-97.

⁵⁰¹ Arnaut, “Corps habillés, Nouchis and subaltern bigmanity in Côte d'Ivoire,” 87.

⁵⁰² Gbagbo supporter, interview with the author in Abidjan, June 24, 2017, in-person.

pieces.⁵⁰³ According to these respondents, the logic behind actions of *ratissage* was that possession of this equipment would hold value in the post-conflict period by opening doors that were reserved for those who fought, such as the army integration or the national DDR programme. Should possession of these objects not be rewarded, they could, at the very least, be sold off on the local markets.⁵⁰⁴ Several *Jeunes Associés* interviewed alleged that regular civilians, with basic knowledge of the crisis, had begun making use of the 'ex-combatant' label in anticipation of the financial compensation thought to be accorded to them.⁵⁰⁵

The variation across stories and identities listed above is undoubtedly difficult to decipher. The most important consideration, however, is that the lines between regular civilian and FN supporter, whether through the military, political, or economic wings, are blurred. It is these blurred identities and claims of participation in the conflict that promoted an underlying belief that there were ample opportunities for claims-making under the ruling regime, and that different groups' political loyalty, and particularly to the President Alassane Ouattara would be compensated.

Post-Conflict Political Engagement: Claims-Making

Amongst the groups mentioned above, claims-making is visible in a variety of forms and is largely dependent on where an individual is located in terms of proximity to influential political actors. For those who benefitted from the national DDR programme and were granted official demobilisation cards and ex-combatant status, claims-making predominantly took the form of protests and association-forming, leveraging the label of 'ex-combatant' to advocate for additional financial support matching the salaries of army-

⁵⁰³ Ivoirian military officers, informal discussions with the author in Abidjan, February 10, 2016, in-person.

⁵⁰⁴ EFA fighter 2, interview with the author in Abidjan-Abobo, September 26, 2016, in-person. The term '*ratissage*' was also commonly used by locals as explanations for how individuals with very questionable ties to the political crisis came in possession of such articles.

⁵⁰⁵ *Jeunes Associés*/DDR ex-combatants, group interview with the author in Abidjan-Attécoubé, December 27, 2016, in-person.

integrated individuals. For ex-combatants from the FN who were demobilised, through the national DDR programme or on their own, claims-making was observed to consist of written pleas addressed to the President and the First Lady. FN supporters who gained employment in the post-conflict recovery sector also used the 'ex-combatant' label to continue using state resources in the post-conflict period. When their contracts ended, however, they lost their access to state resources and attempted to use the label and continued professions of loyalty to Ouattara, the former ComZones, and to those closest to Soro to lobby for facilitated recruitment. The following sections examine the range of practices and tactics used demobilised FN use to make claims for employment and social services.

Protests

Between 2011 and 2018, multiple protests were carried out by groups of ex-combatants. Initially, grievances were raised by those who were registered in the national DDR programme and revolved around tardy payment schedules.⁵⁰⁶ Multiple protests took place between 2014-2016 focused on the operational challenges of the national DDR programme, demanding swifter delivery of entitlements. However, after the national DDR programme closed, ex-combatant protests continued and expanded to include demobilised FN fighters who did not participate and did not receive official ex-combatant status. The grievances of the post-DDR period reflect the broader trends of political engagement by FN supporters for either armed force integration or payments to match the salaries they would have earned if they had been integrated. The claims made by FN supporters in the post-DDR period were made directly to the regime, and often evoked memories of participation in the FN and their role in bringing Ouattara to power. This thesis considers these claims to be inherently political as they are voiced by a specific group of supporters to their political patrons and evoke sentiments of a mutually beneficial exchange. Because the FN brought Ouattara to power, FN supporters argue that they must

⁵⁰⁶ Ivorian Former ADDR staff, interview with the author in Abidjan-Cocody, November 17, 2016, in-person.

now be compensated. To illustrate this point, this Chapter focuses on FN claims-making activities that took place after the close of the DDR programme, with particular emphasis on those that took place alongside the mutinies of 2017.

At the same time as the May 2017 mutiny, a 'demobilised fighters' protest was organised at the same site as the mutiny in Bouaké, although it received considerably less media attention.⁵⁰⁷ On the 8th of May 2017, after mutinous soldiers succeeded in receiving their payments, which totalled 12 million F CFA, ex-combatants from the most recently formed "*Cellule 39*", blocked access to Bouaké, making claims for integration into the army as well as a payment of 18,000,000 F CFA (approximately £24,000).⁵⁰⁸ "*Cellule 39*" is named after the first wave of demobilised soldiers who received a registration number with the prefix '39'; and whose participation in the FN rebellion dates back to 2002.⁵⁰⁹ Subsequent waves of demobilisation can be identified by the first two numbers of their registration documents. While many staked claims for well above the 12 million received by the mutinous soldiers months earlier, other ex-combatants at the scene sought to use the high-profile event to remind the authorities of their own plight. The protests centred in Bouaké, with a relatively small turn out in Abidjan and Korhogo of approximately 50 people each. In a local newspaper, one demobilised protestor from Korhogo stated: "Like the mutinous militaries, we are making claims to president Ouattara for our (rebellion) wartime bonuses."⁵¹⁰ Looking for a similar response from the regime that the mutineers received in both January and May, demobilised protestors stated repeatedly across media outlets that they would not stop protesting unless the President, the Minister of Defence, Alain-Richard Donwahi, or the Military Chief of Staff,

⁵⁰⁷ Small numbers of demobilised fighters were also present in other cities alongside the mutinies, however, due to the size and historical importance of Bouaké, media focused attention on the events in Bouake.

⁵⁰⁸ Claire Rainfroy, "Côte d'Ivoire: des démobilisés endeuillés réclament à leur tour des primes," *Jeune Afrique*, May 22, 2017, http://www.jeuneafrique.com/440906/politique/cote-divoire-demobilises-endeuilles-reclament-a-tour-primes/?utm_source=Newsletter_JA_Actu&utm_medium=Email&utm_campaign=Newsletter_JA_Actu_23_05_17.

⁵⁰⁹ Kamina Dialla, "La Cellule 39 en Côte d'Ivoire: Processus d'Identification et de Mobilisation d'un Groupe d'Ex-Combattants," *Afrique Contemporaine* 3, no. 263-264 (2017) : 178.

⁵¹⁰ "Côte d'Ivoire: des 'démobilisés' bloquent des accès à Bouaké et Korhogo," AFP, May 22, 2017: <http://news.abidjan.net/h/615482.html>.

Touré Sekou, responded directly to their claims.⁵¹¹ None of the sought authorities responded to the demobilised FN, focusing their efforts rather on the mutineers.

Despite common grievances and origins, the mutinous integrated FN soldiers did not universally welcome the presence of demobilised ex-combatants. As the mutinous soldiers held their positions mid-May, clashes occurred between them and the demobilised fighters. The peak of clashes resulted in the mutinous soldiers firing on ex-combatants to remove them and disassociate their own version of claims-making. The presence of protesting ex-combatants alongside the mutineers, it was believed by some soldiers, risked diluting the legitimacy of claims made by the soldiers themselves.⁵¹² As a result, one demobilised claims-maker succumbed to his injuries and passed away on the 14th May. Following the death of the ex-combatant, military Chief of Staff, Sekou Touré, travelled to Bouaké and asked for forgiveness from the ex-combatants for the poor behaviour of the FOCI soldiers.⁵¹³

Nevertheless, once again on the 22nd of May, ex-combatants took to the streets, briefly occupying the highway access point outside of Abidjan and in Korhogo. This time, the protest was addressed by the Minister of Solidarity, Mariatou Koné. To appease the disgruntled demobilised combatants, the minister delivered a speech in which she pledged, on behalf of President Ouattara and his government, more funds for projects for the demobilised FN ex-combatants. The Minister's speech made no mention of their claims for greater sums of bonus payments than those received by the mutineers, nor did it address any of the additional claims raised by past groups of demobilised FN.⁵¹⁴ Following the minister's speech and departure, morale among the demobilised FN present on site remained sceptical, with one protestor stating:

⁵¹¹ "Côte d'Ivoire: des 'démobilisés' bloquent des accès à Bouaké et Korhogo," AFP.

⁵¹² Rainfroy, "Côte d'Ivoire."

⁵¹³ Rainfroy, "Côte d'Ivoire."

⁵¹⁴ Rainfroy, "Côte d'Ivoire". "Les ex-combattants bloquent le corridor Sud et formulent des revendications: Une rencontre annoncée avec le Chef de l'Etat," *L'Inter*, no. 5667 (May 9, 2017). Additional claims made by groups of Demobilised FN include increased healthcare, education provisions for their children and grandchildren, soap allowances, and national recognition for their experiences. These claims will be more closely examined in the following sections.

“How do you pay 17 million [F CFA to mutineers]—12 million this year and 5 million in 2014 to the mutineers and to us you talk about projects!”⁵¹⁵

The presence of ex-combatants at the site of the May mutiny had particular significance to this research. For many weeks an interview was sought with a specific ex-combatant who had allegedly played a key role in the founding of an ex-combatant association in Bouaké. News returned, by way of the gatekeeper, that the individual sought was planning a ‘sensitive’ activity and was unlikely to be available in the coming weeks. Within days of receiving this news, the second mutiny in May broke out, with groups of ex-combatants protesting alongside it to also benefit from the pay-outs. The demobilised FN ex-combatants, while maintaining weak links with the mutineers, hoped to also benefit from the media presence and to engage in negotiations with the government officials that would come and quell the uprisings. Three days after the mutiny ended, the FN gatekeeper informed me through a phone call that many of the ex-combatants demonstrating had been arrested. The gatekeeper, himself an ex-combatant who easily moved between different sub-groups of FN, theatrically described the injustice of the events. In his telling, none of the demobilised FN protesters were armed, nor did they organise any strike or protest; they simply took to the streets to bring attention to their grievances. Evoking themes of injustice, the gatekeeper drew on the events as proof that the mutinous soldiers who took up arms had “got to sit around a table with the Minister, while the ex-combatants are now in prison.”⁵¹⁶ Injustice, he explained, was the way the government responded and treated different post-conflict groups with the same origins and wartime experiences. As they were all from the FN, brought Ouattara to power, and continued to pledge political loyalty to him, they should be accounted for equally. This story is insightful for two reasons. First, it suggests that there might have been a degree of information-sharing between the demobilised FN and those who would go on to form the mutinies, although this remains unconfirmed. Second, echoing the statements

⁵¹⁵ Agence France Presse, “Côte d’Ivoire: des “démobilisés” bloquent des accès à Bouaké et Korhogo,” May 22, 2017, <http://news.abidjan.net/h/615482.html>.

⁵¹⁶ FN ex-combatant gatekeeper (in Bouaké), discussion with the author from Abidjan-Cocody, May 25, 2017, on the telephone.

of the gatekeeper, the pay-outs to the mutineers and the subsequent arrests and of the ex-combatants further reinforced the perception that claims-making through violence elicits the best responses.⁵¹⁷

While the protest above was the most notable organised demonstration by ex-combatants, protests have been the primary form of claims-making. Prior to this, various gatherings were held at several points in the post-crisis period, once the national DDR programme had ended. As mentioned in Chapter 1 (Introduction), a demobilised FN supporter threatened to undertake a hunger strike to stake claims for similar compensation.⁵¹⁸ In most cases, the protests elicited monetary compensation or military integration from the regime, and the protestors often made pleas personal by addressing the president himself. In addition to mounting their own public protests and demonstrations for more compensation, the ex-combatants are suspected of having captured more mainstream public protests. For instance, the protest against the Compagnie Ivoirienne d'électricité (CIE) in Bouaké on the 22nd of July 2016 was a civilian-led protest about the rising price of electricity. The confrontation, resulted in one death, tens of injured, and between 44-50 arrests, many of which are rumoured to be demobilised FN ex-combatants.⁵¹⁹ The ex-combatants believed to have been present allegedly infiltrated the civilian protest to "show authorities they are still there".⁵²⁰ Following the protest, the FN gatekeeper informed me that some of the ex-combatants were being detained by the authorities for further investigation over what their real motives were.⁵²¹ This information could not be confirmed, but if true, demonstrates the willingness of the demobilised FN to seize protest opportunities that are not originally their own.

What is still puzzling about the protests, is that despite their repeated use amongst the demobilised FN, they have yielded few positive results. In

⁵¹⁷ Kamina Dialla, "La Cellule 39 en Côte d'Ivoire: Processus d'Identification et de Mobilisation d'un Groupe d'Ex-Combattants," *Afrique Contemporaine* 3, no. 263-264 (2017): 179-180.

⁵¹⁸ "Le Collectif des Leaders des Ex-Combattants Démobilisés de Côte d'Ivoire," Public letter addressed to the Governor of Gbéké, Préfet of Bouaké, September 14, 2015.

⁵¹⁹ Radio France Internationale, "Côte d'Ivoire: un mort dans une manifestation contre la hausse de l'électricité," July 22, 2016, www.rfi.fr/afrique/20160722-cote-ivoire-mort-manifestation-bouake-electricite.

⁵²⁰ FN ex-combatant gatekeeper, discussion with the author in Abidjan-Cocody, 25 July 2016, in-person.

⁵²¹ FN ex-combatant gatekeeper, discussion with the author in Abidjan-Cocody, 25 July 2016, in-person.

most cases described above, they were more likely to wield negative outcomes such as detainment and suspicion from the regime. For protest to be considered a viable option, there should either be signs that it will generate the desired outcome, or precedence in which protest yielded positive results. Braithwaite et al. explain that the “onset of protest requires an additional catalyst for mobilisation, namely, examples elsewhere that show mobilisation is possible.”⁵²² This chapter, therefore, advances the likelihood that the demobilised FN drew inspiration, and motivation, for continuing protests when they saw that the integrated FN had successfully received pay-outs for similar claims in 2014, and again in 2017. This would explain why they continued to highlight their roles in the FN, their contribution to bringing Ouattara to power, and their expectations for the same types of bonuses given to those who were integrated. It equally helps explain why the demobilised FN sometimes infiltrated civilian protests and sought to ‘remind authorities’ that they were still active. In this sense, the suggestion that they could sow insecurity even through protests that were not their own, gives the idea that they could also be a source of instability, even if on a less grand scale as the mutineers.

Association-Forming

Since 2011, ex-combatant associations in Côte d’Ivoire have taken on many different names and compositions, making it difficult to identify a stable group with fixed membership and a significant lifespan.

Much of the early academic literature about ex-combatants argued that the act of retaining wartime social networks was a sign of failed demobilisation. Recently, however, researchers have begun to see the merits of maintaining wartime social connections to facilitate social and economic transitions in civilian life. One such study is that from South Sudan’s DDR process. This study called into question the assumption that “demobilisation” and “reintegration”

⁵²² Alex Braithwait, Jessica Maves Braithwaite, and Jeffrey Kuck, “The Conditioning Effect of Protest History on the Emulation of Non-Violent Conflict,” *Journal of Peace Research* 52, no. 6, (2015): 698.

were realistic, or even desirable.⁵²³ It also made compelling arguments that both structures and societies emerging from war are not necessarily homogeneous—that is, uniformly willing or unwilling to reintegrate ex-combatants. In such societies, opinions of the war and the perceptions of the fighters may vary, thus refuting the assumption that the best way to peace and security is to reintegrate combatants back into their communities.⁵²⁴ Moreover, in the post-conflict period, these command structures may take on new forms, providing camaraderie and economic opportunities for advancement, such as grouping together for access to limited land.⁵²⁵ Several examples of positive outcomes for ex-combatants who retain their networks are also found in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and in Sierra Leone. In the DRC, a World Bank study shed light on the willingness of ex-combatants to pool their resources to increase their chances of building a sustainable livelihood. In these cases, associations were formed around trades of interest, such as local mechanics associations.⁵²⁶ In Sierra Leone, motorcycle associations flourished in the post-conflict period as ex-combatants found a niche employment area that they could further develop. The success of the motorcycle-taxi services, within which prominent workers associations can be found, have also become useful for students and youth wishing to make quick money.⁵²⁷ In both cases, despite their wartime hierarchies largely remaining in-tact, the maintained connections made the post-conflict period more conducive for ex-combatant reintegration.

Association-forming in Côte d'Ivoire is not a new phenomenon. As previously mentioned in Chapter 2, under the one-party state of Houphouët-Boigny, political appointments were restrictive as they were based on top-down

⁵²³ Hugo De Vries and Nikkie Wiegink, "Breaking up and Going Home? Contesting Two Assumptions in the Demobilisation and Reintegration of Former Combatants," *International Peacekeeping* 18, no. 1: 38-39.

⁵²⁴ De Vries and Wiegink, "Breaking up and Going Home?," 39, 45.

⁵²⁵ De Vries and Wiegink, "Breaking up and Going Home?," 48.

⁵²⁶ Natacha Lemasle, "From Conflict to Resilience: Ex-Combatant Trade Associations in Post Conflict: Lessons Learnt from the Republic of Congo and the Democratic Republic of Congo," World Bank (2012): 5, <http://www.tdrp.net/PDFs/DRC%20ROC%20Excombatants%20trade%20associations%20Jan%202012.pdf>

⁵²⁷ Krijn Peters, "From Weapons to Wheels: Young Sierra Leonean Ex-Combatants Become Motorbike Taxi-Riders," *Journal of Peace Conflict and Development* 10 (March 2007): 16.

appointments. As a way of getting around the perceived obstacles, indigenous elites took interest in association-forming in their respective territories.⁵²⁸ The creation of associations was frequently formed in accordance with different trades, who acted as political pressure groups. Despite being built around a specific trade of specialisation, the associations effectively communicated citizen demands upwards to Houphouët-Boigny's central government—a structure that was often out of reach for regular citizens. This led to the creation of various local development associations, each of which, like the trades associations, represented the interests of local communities as they related to their given areas.⁵²⁹ As a result of their growth from the bottom-up, associations inevitably developed ethnic identities. Dwayne Woods explains that “these associations were formed to promote the economic and cultural development of a given area, with the historically predominant ethnic community as the main basis of identification.”⁵³⁰ To better integrate these associations into his political apparatus, the PDCI transformed these ‘ethnic’ associations into party subcommittees, as a vehicle for communication with local populations, collecting dues, and passing down PDCI directions across ethnic groups and languages.⁵³¹ In 1963 and 1964, however, only a few years after officially coming to power, Houphouët-Boigny launched a political offensive against the committees, resulting in the banning of ethnic subcommittees and bringing all political activities into tighter control under the PDCI. From then on, only associations with socio-professional lines were recognised and required the endorsement of the State.⁵³² An example of an association restricted to socio-professional lines is the Transporter's Association in the south of Côte d'Ivoire, that effectively bridged ethnic divides between northern migrant communities, who were traditionally commerce and transport-oriented, with southern populations. A detailed study of the association revealed that the organisation

⁵²⁸ Dwayne Woods, “‘Elites, Ethnicity, and ‘Home Town’ Associations in Côte d'Ivoire,’ An Historical Analysis of State, Society, Links,” *Journal of the International African Institute* 64, no. 4 (1994): 467.

⁵²⁹ Woods, “Elites, Ethnicity, and ‘Home Town’ Associations in Côte d'Ivoire,” 466.

⁵³⁰ Woods, “Elites, Ethnicity, and ‘Home Town’ Associations in Côte d'Ivoire,” 466.

⁵³¹ Woods, “Elites, Ethnicity, and ‘Home Town’ Associations in Côte d'Ivoire,” 467.

⁵³² Woods, “Elites, Ethnicity, and ‘Home Town’ Associations in Côte d'Ivoire,” 467-468.

effectively bridged gaps by allowing “transporters [to] consciously seek to preserve the functionally specific nature of concerns and goals in the face of traditional factors dividing members.”⁵³³ In this sense, the association “illustrate[d] how formal political structure interacts with the definition and articulation of citizen demands.”⁵³⁴ It also illustrated the reluctance of many associations to disclaim that they are specifically catered to one ethnicity or one voting bloc over the other.

In post-conflict Côte d’Ivoire, association-forming took on a different dimension. The majority of ex-combatant associations were composed of FN-supporting ex-combatants that were not integrated into the army. Internally, their members may or may not have benefitted from the national DDR programme, and according to their claims, seemed almost irrelevant if they had. The claims put forth by the ex-combatant associations focused almost exclusively on financial compensation and integration into a salaried position, the most sought after being a post in the state armed forces. The most prominent associations to have arisen include the *Association des Démobilisés de Côte d’Ivoire* (ADCI) and the *Collectif des Ex-Combattants et Représentants des ADS* (*Le Collectif*). The ADCI, for instance, was created in 2008 in the Bouaké, the heart of the FN rebellion. Research conducted by Moussa Fofana described how the primary goal of the ADCI was to develop favourable relations with the FN hierarchy and the Prime Minister of the time, Guillaume Soro.⁵³⁵ Although their base was in Bouaké, they had several offices across the country. In the post-conflict period, the ADCI was most active during the time of the national DDR process, and often supported national DDR authorities with community outreach. The ADCI was commonly known to have been involved in fraudulent activities such as granting ex-combatant status to non-ex-

⁵³³ Barbara Caroline Lewis, *The Transporter’s Association of the Ivory Coast. Ethnicity, Occupational Specialization, and National Integration*, PhD Dissertation, Northwestern University, 1970: ix.
<https://search.proquest.com/docview/302443919/?pq-origsite=primo>.

⁵³⁴ Barbara Caroline Lewis, *The Transporter’s Association of the Ivory Coast*, ix.

⁵³⁵ Moussa Fofana, “Réintégration socioéconomique des Forces nouvelles. Trajectoires risquées pour jeunes à risque,” *Institut Catala Internacional Per La Pau Gran*, vol III (2014): 155.

combatants and for making demands for financial pay-outs.⁵³⁶ By the time of fieldwork in 2016, the ADCI had seemed to be disbanded, the reasons for which are unknown. It is likely that some of their leaders were arrested and the association crumbled. Due to the sensitive security environment at the time of data collection, with many state-led crackdowns on associations of this nature to identify individuals disturbing the peace, this section focuses on the association *Le Collectif*, as data was less restricted. *Le Collectif* is an example of a highly structured association that followed an explicit mandate of advancing ex-combatant interests, and of professing unabated loyalty to the president of the ruling regime, Alassane Ouattara.

Le Collectif, is an example of an association with a robust structure and a lengthy list of requests for both material and moral support from the ruling regime. The key posts within the association include a President, Vice-President, Secretary General, Assistant Secretary General, Treasurer General, and auditors.⁵³⁷ Although the exact number of members remains undocumented, the association claims to have designated 22 delegates in Bouaké alone, with similar representation across the Ivoirian territory. The association is bound by 13 articles, which stipulate the conditions for membership such as having an apolitical stance, the use of majority voting rules, compliance, as well as establishes the grounds for banishment.⁵³⁸ The initial pages of its foundational document give semblance of an organisation that is well defined and highly structured.⁵³⁹ The one discrepancy between its conditions and reality, however, is that its members are associated with the FN rebellion and have openly professed loyalty to Ouattara in the pages that follow.

Consistent with many associations, *Le Collectif* has a number of objectives it hopes to achieve, and, therefore, has adapted its foundational

⁵³⁶ Unconfirmed rumors, multiple sources from Demobilised FN and FACI military officers, Abidjan, July 2016 - January 2017.

⁵³⁷ "Statut et Règlement Intérieur du Collectif des Ex-combattants et les Représentants des ADS du 19 Septembre 2002 – 2010 – 2015": 3.

⁵³⁸ "Statut et Règlement Intérieur du Collectif des Ex-combattants et les Représentants des ADS du 19 Septembre 2002 – 2010 – 2015": 4.

⁵³⁹ An excerpt from the Foundational document can be found in Appendix B.

document to both government and international audiences, in the hopes that these actors would recognise the validity of their claims and lobby in support of them.⁵⁴⁰ Amongst the priority demands laid out in the document are to register ex-combatants in the DDR programme (which they achieved), monthly family soap allowances,⁵⁴¹ army integration for those between 35-40 years of age, the payment of all school fees for dependents of those between 41-55 years of age, and finally, national recognition for wartime contribution and sacrifices for those ex-combatants between 55-60 years of age.⁵⁴² Beyond these requests, *Le Collectif* developed a number of proposals in which they could support the state. One such suggestion was the proposal to launch their own disarmament operations, identifying all “veritable” ex-combatants through a self-created honour code, which required all participants to adhere to the internal code of the association. To finance and support the operations, funds would be sought from the UN and the European Union.⁵⁴³ It is important to note that the offer to disarm and regroup the ex-combatants, dated for 8th of July 2016, came just over a year after the official close of the national DDR programme on the 30th of June 2015, suggesting that the association knew of additional ex-combatants that still needed to be disarmed. The proposal of working alongside the national programmes, in support of them, and on a voluntary basis, was likely an attempt to demonstrate their professional capacities and to be absorbed into the official state structures as employees.

The second proposal falls in line with what was recorded by multiple international observers as “volunteer” and mimicking military behaviour amongst ex-combatants seeking integration into the state armed forces. Article 13 of the statute states:

⁵⁴⁰ I received the foundational documents from a colleague working in an international organisation who had been approached by the association to discuss the documents and to lobby to the regime.

⁵⁴¹ The ‘soap allowance’ was allegedly implemented during Gbagbo’s rule, providing families with a small amount of money each month to purchase soap and other products that promote good hygiene. I was unable to verify this beyond personal recollections by Gbagbo supporters.

⁵⁴² “Statut et Règlement Intérieur du Collectif des Ex-combattants et les Représentants des ADS du 19 Septembre 2002 – 2010 – 2015”: 11-12.

⁵⁴³ “Feuille de Route des Ex-combattants et les Représentants des ADS,” Bouake, July 8, 2016.

Every member of [*Le Collectif*] must make themselves available to participate in a possible security operation under the supervision of a state authorities of defence and security. This will show the willingness of the members of the ADS and *Le Collectif* of ex-combatants to integrate into the armed forces.⁵⁴⁴

The voluntarily accompaniment of young FN soldiers mirrors the experiences that groups such as the *Jeunes Associés* had during and following the post-electoral crisis of 2011. This passage builds on Arnaut's research of Gbagbo supporters' mimicking behaviour, by extending it to groups of FN supporters as well.⁵⁴⁵ In Arnaut's study, young Gbagbo supporters that were often not affiliated to any of the established militia groups would group around a 'leader' in an attempt to prove their status as auto-defence groups and eventually benefit from post-war recovery benefits (integration or DDR). In one case, a group occupied an abandoned hotel on the Abidjan-Bassam route, claiming it was their 'base' until they were disbanded by the authorities and the hotel was reclaimed by the owner.⁵⁴⁶ These attempts mirror efforts by the *Jeunes Associés*, who also inhabited abandoned buildings, voluntarily escorted ComZones and other state forces. While the Gbagbo supporters mentioned were made to leave the building immediately following the post-electoral crisis, the *Jeunes Associés* remained in their makeshift residences until 2015, eventually benefitting from national DDR funds. The excerpt from *Le Collectif* evokes the same images, and perhaps, displays their hope that should they also accompany armed forces on a voluntary basis, they will be compensated, or at least have additional grounds to base their claims-making from. Together, the research demonstrates how association with wartime experiences during the 11-year crisis was highly desirable amongst many Ivoirians from both sides, resulting in a bottom-up method of self-recruitment to obtain post-conflict livelihood options.

Beyond providing context and justification for their claims, the core documents of the association drew on allusions of dangerous and high-risk ex-

⁵⁴⁴ "Statut et Règlement Intérieur du Collectif des Ex-combattants et les Représentants des ADS du 19 Septembre 2002 – 2010 – 2015": 9.

⁵⁴⁵ Arnaut, "Corps habillés, Nouchis and subaltern bigmanity in Côte d'Ivoire," 85, 90.

⁵⁴⁶ Arnaut, "Corps habillés, Nouchis and subaltern bigmanity in Côte d'Ivoire," 90.

combatants to buttress its pleas. Ex-combatants, within many post-conflict contexts, have often been conceptualised as a problem to be dealt with for fear of the return to violence as the primary justification for financial assistance.⁵⁴⁷ Within the official documents of *Le Collectif*, the discourse is constructed around themes of peace and compliance with the post-crisis State, rather than the assumed default option of danger and havoc. Statements such as the following suggest a willingness of members of *Le Collectif* to promote an image of stereotypical dangerous combatants. Although they explicitly reject the violent means, the excerpt is written in a way that reminds its audience of its violent potential, and that it has since reformed into a passive group embracing peaceful means:

Following the crisis, we were a source of terror for many. [...] We are not of savage character, without brains, without pity, and primitive. [...] We do not want to destroy anymore, much less destabilise our country.⁵⁴⁸

This reveals that many demobilised FN have opted for the association method of claims-making to play on assumptions of ex-combatants as ruthless thugs, terrorising populations through both physical violence and the destruction of property. While clearly showing a willingness to behave as law-abiding citizens, the allusions to what they consider to be public opinion of ex-combatants as ruthless combatants equally serves as a reminder of the destruction and destabilisation that they could inflict should their grievances go unanswered. Similar wording also present near the end of the document, with *Le Collectif* drawing on the events of the 11-year crisis to remind the regime of their contributions to victory. For example, the document declares:

We dare remind the State of the decisive role we played to re-establish peace. These efforts need to be recognised and encouraged.⁵⁴⁹

⁵⁴⁷ Sukanya Podder, "Ex-combatant agency and re-recruitment," *Critical Studies on Security* 5, no. 2 (2017): 145.

⁵⁴⁸ "Statut et Règlement Intérieur du Collectif des Ex-combattants et les Représentants des ADS du 19 Septembre 2002 – 2010 – 2015": 1, 11.

⁵⁴⁹ "Statut et Règlement Intérieur du Collectif des Ex-combattants et les Représentants des ADS du 19 Septembre 2002 – 2010 – 2015" : 13.

In this statement, members of *Le Collectif* invoke reminders of the post-electoral crisis, and the 'decisive' role they played, with a disregard for the decisive role played by IB's Commando Invisibles in Abidjan, or of the atrocities attributed to the FN as they descended from the north to take Abidjan.⁵⁵⁰ The phenomenon of multiple groups competing for recognition in the FN-victory, and sometimes claiming the successes of the Commando Invisibles as their own is examined in Chapter 8.

While association-forming has been prevalent amongst groups of demobilised FN ex-combatants, it was recorded to have occurred once amongst the Gbagbo supporters as well, albeit only developing to a nascent phase, as already discussed in Chapter 5. In this instance, young members of the FDS were allegedly enlisted into Gbagbo's state army in the wake of the 2010-11 post-electoral crisis only to be dismissed from the post-crisis unified army under the ruling regime of Alassane Ouattara. In turn, they formed an association to voice their demands. However, no incidents or public events were associated with this group during interviews with those familiar with its existence. Having largely refrained from claims-making, they were collectively approached by members of the national DDR programme to join, and at the very least, benefit from the financial allotments provided to ex-combatants. In the end, the members declined the offer, insisting that they were soldiers rather than 'ex-combatants'.⁵⁵¹ When attempting to contact the group for this research, members typically denied their membership and disconnected calls. The gatekeeper to the group suggested that this behaviour was due to their persistent fear of persecution by state authorities loyal to the Ouattara government. Despite having formed an association, which has likely now ceased to exist, the behaviour of its members stands in stark contrast to that of the Demobilised FN ex-combatant associations. At no time during the fieldwork,

⁵⁵⁰ An Interview with the former UNOCI engineering employee based in the southwest office during the time of the Duékoué massacres confidently stated that the numbers of FN were inflated. He mused that it was "just a few" who swept through the southwest. At the time of writing, it was virtually impossible to find the actual numbers of FN participants that came down south. While it is possible that this informant exaggerated his claims, it is important to note that there is still uncertainty over the number of FN participants in the post-electoral crisis.

⁵⁵¹ Internal office report of sensitization mission carried out with said association, Autorité de Désarmement, Démobilisation, Réintégration Côte d'Ivoire, Abidjan, no date - source estimates 2014.

or in local newspaper articles were there any mentions of public statements being made, individuals taking to the streets, or producing official documents to reveal their identities to the state authorities. Much of their reluctance to be public likely stems from the same fears and concerns of Gbagbo supporters, as discussed in Chapter 5. While this thesis was not able to collect substantial data on the Gbagbo-supporting association, this lack of evidence confirms that the association did not seek to publicly leverage their status as former fighters to make claims.

While associations have been deemed useful to the above-mentioned Demobilised FN groups, many individuals have opted to refrain from large organised gatherings altogether. Association-forming, explained by a demobilised FN who refrained from it, requires a certain degree of trust among members. That is, confidence that there are no infiltrators, as well as confidence that the grievances of the group outweigh those of the individual.⁵⁵² This opinion was shared in the DRC when questioned why some individual ex-combatants had refrained from collective trades work, or for those that did participate in the associations, as a challenge they frequently were faced with.⁵⁵³ For other Ivoirians who have official ex-combatant status from the DDR programme, association-forming was likely to draw unwanted attention so they did not employ it as a tactic. Describing their strategy of refraining from groups bigger than four to five people in public, these respondents spoke of their fears of looking suspicious to the state armed forces, thus bringing about unnecessary questioning in the wake of mutiny and national fatigue of ex-combatant protests.⁵⁵⁴

Claims-Making at the Margins

Alongside collective attempts at claims-making by leveraging labels of ex-combatant and wartime experiences, several individual efforts were also

⁵⁵² EFA fighter 3, interview with the author in Abidjan-Attécoubé, December 23, 2016, in-person.

⁵⁵³ Lemasle, "From Conflict to Resilience," 8.

⁵⁵⁴ FN-loyalists/*Jeunes Associés*, group interview with the author Abidjan-Attécoubé, December 27, 2016, in-person.

observed, primarily in the form of individual letter-writing to high-ranking government officials, informal and loosely-structured networks, and attempts to create employment opportunities linked to post-conflict programming. The methods of claims-making observed were frequently used by individuals who sat at the margins of clientelistic connections, but who nevertheless self-identified as demobilised FN ex-combatants, whether through the national DDR programme or through a self-demobilisation.

For those who wrote letters, they were typically addressed to elites within the regime, most commonly to the President of the Republic, to the First Lady, to relevant ministers, and to the Director of related programmes such as the national DDR programme. Claims-making through letters was less common and public than both the protests and association-forming, however, was a method that participants frequently described as a last-ditch effort. Although a handful of respondents vocalised that they would write letters directly to President Ouattara should their plight be ignored, only one of the respondents had actually written to him, multiple times.

In August 2016, at a small table in Abobo, one self-identifying EFA ex-combatant displayed a series of letters he had written to the President, the First Lady, and the Director of the national DDR programme. In addition to the letters were supporting documents listing names of EFA fighters who had been integrated into the state armed forces, including the military, penitentiary guards, and special forces, with hand-written notes of who had allegedly paid a bribe to integrate and who had not. The interviewee who authored the letters explained that the majority of the names listed had paid their way into the army, while the remaining were waiting the support of the President for their integration.⁵⁵⁵ Only a handful of individuals remained without having successfully integrated. The fighter who had written the letters was one person who still wanted to be included. The first letter the fighter shared was addressed to president Ouattara, dated back to 2014, and spoke mostly of the plight of the remaining EFA fighters in the post-crisis period. The letter was received by the

⁵⁵⁵Copy of supporting documents for letters, "Liste Elements EFA Abidjan- 1er, 2em, 3eme,4e, e Vagues," no date.

President's office, with a stamp and signature of the receiving officer. Approximately two years later, in 2016, a similar letter was sent and addressed to the First Lady, highlighting the failure of the first round of correspondence, a slightly more personal touch, and a reminder of expectations of victory. This particular letter stated the following, suggesting the expectation of 'their own' to solve their outstanding problems:

We imagined that re-election of Mr. President of the Republic to the greatest seat ("*magistrature suprême*"), would solve definitively the issue of the EFA fighters.⁵⁵⁶

In the last letter provided, which was dated 31st March 2016 and was addressed to the President, the author highlighted that he was told that the President would meet with him after his re-election in November 2015. At the time of writing this thesis, five months have already elapsed without any follow-up.⁵⁵⁷ The method of letter-writing was used only by this respondent. The reasons for this is likely due to the low literacy rates amongst the demobilised FN, as well as a somewhat unique personal willingness to officially put into his grievances into writing. The willingness to attach his name and contact details, all the while keeping his set of claims separate (but related to) the more general claims of the FN for general integration, suggests a certain degree of validity.

Aside from letter writing, for others at the margins of claims-making, informal and loosely-structured networks of ex-combatants were created following the post-electoral crisis, by individuals with similar situations—a shared FN experience and a willingness to advance their interests. These informal structures often designated a focal person to track information of relevance to the community. Upon doing an interview with one FN supporter from this type of organisation, the focal person was described as being tasked with maintaining a political and security situational awareness, as well as identifying opportunities for claims-making that would advance the interests of the individuals who chose to participate in their structure. In the same

⁵⁵⁶ Copy of correspondence letter addressed to Mme la Première Dame, by a representative of EFA in Abidjan, February 29, 2016.

⁵⁵⁷ Original correspondence, letter addressed to the President of the Republic, by a representative of EFA in Abidjan, March 31, 2016.

discussion, the members of the structure described selecting one individual they had met while in re-socialisation camp to collect relevant information and disseminate it to any ex-combatant interested. Mid-interview, the selected individual joined the discussion, and described the ways that information flowed in their network. Rather than a formal association, recipients of the information saw it more as a delegation of responsibility, in which the selected individual could communicate relevant news to the group and disseminate any further information regarding possible political engagement initiatives. They did not have any formal meetings, opting to discuss their information and potential courses of action amongst themselves when they casually met up instead. Some of the previous political engagement initiatives carried out by this group included letter-writing and requesting meetings with the state authorities. Their claims focused on requests for employment to match their post-crisis training, as well as financial compensation for those who are unemployed.⁵⁵⁸

Additional efforts recorded amongst individuals from the Demobilised FN group included propagating discourses of instability in an effort to keep post-conflict recovery programmes running and to maintain their employment within them. As observed repeatedly amongst Demobilised FN ex-combatants who had obtained employment in any of the post-conflict recovery programs, both international and domestic, frequent warnings were given to their hierarchies about the alleged presence of weapons in circulation. Conversely, Gbagbo-aligned ex-combatants often dismissed such claims as FN affiliates trying to prolong their earnings.⁵⁵⁹ Dire warnings such as these were most heavily pushed by two separate demobilised FN individuals, both local staff employed by the national DDR programme: one as a mobile weapons collector, and the other as the former head of office at the commune-level. During the initial post-conflict phase, benefits were allotted through government-funded programmes to these staff working in post-conflict programming. Such benefits and entitlements included a special '*laissez-passez*' marker on their vehicles to pass

⁵⁵⁸ FN-loyalists/*Jeunes Associés*, group interview with the author Abidjan-Attécoubé, December 27, 2016, in-person.

⁵⁵⁹ Multiple informal discussions with Gbagbo-supporting ex-combatants and civilians held with the author in various public and private spaces, including UN peacekeeping Headquarters, national ADDR offices, and in local bars and restaurants in Abidjan, August 2016 - February 2017.

easily through check-points and get optimal parking spots, fuel allowances, monthly salaries, and a certain proximity to state authorities overseeing the programme and holding influential posts within the post-conflict government. While the benefits mentioned above can be discussed at length, it suffices to examine the case of specific vehicle markers allotted to one of the individuals: the black licence plate.

The black licence plate holds significant prestige in Côte d'Ivoire. When obtained through the proper channels, the plate is used to facilitate movement across the country and through checkpoints, and to access sensitive security zones. The symbolic value that it demonstrated to the general public was that the driver and passengers of the vehicle were defence sector VIPs, or within the VIP's spheres of influence. Moreover, the plates signified that the vehicle had received the highest level of security clearance and was permitted to move across the country uninspected, possibly carrying dangerous goods such as weapons, and signalling to checkpoints that it had received authorisation to do so. Not only were these vehicles theoretically government vehicles but they were also used for official missions and specific tasks for national security. Only a handful of black licence plates could be assigned to select individuals by the designated state authorities.⁵⁶⁰

In one incident on the 8th of August 2016, approximately 13 months after the close of the national DDR programme for which the plate's use was justified by the individual possessing it, the demobilised FN respondent was told to remove the plates and return them to the state authorities. The reasons given to the respondent included the need to gain more control over cross-border crime and the smuggling of illegal goods—activities the plates would facilitate with little scrutiny.⁵⁶¹ After bringing the topic up with a national authority from the Ministry of Defence who directly oversaw the operations of the plate-holder while he was employed, the response was slightly different than the version the holder had given. In his response, the state authority explained with frustration that the Demobilised FN respondent should never have obtained the plates. He

⁵⁶⁰ Captain at Ministry of Defence, interview with the author in Abidjan-Plateau, September 19, 2016, in-person.

⁵⁶¹ FN ex-combatant gatekeeper, Interview with the author in Abidjan-Cocody, August 8, 2016, in-person.

went on to explain how during the crisis, 'small guys' would collect random scraps, or sometimes even steal high-value items such as the plates, and would then use them as if it had been given to them legitimately. When asked why the individual was permitted to use the plates for so long while employed in a post-crisis recovery programme, the authority further explained that it was only recently that the issuing-authorities re-organised themselves and their institutional structures and had the capacity to take stock of all the licence plates. Taking stock of the plates was not the priority of the institution, who underwent an entire re-structuring following the crisis. Now that the issuing authority was operational again, it closely inspected the use of the licence plates, recalling those that were obtained through unofficial channels.⁵⁶² When the plates were finally removed, the Demobilised FN individual lamented the lack of regard granted to him despite his involvement in the struggle. The plate, for this individual, seemed to be more a good of redistribution under a system of patronage, than as a tool of state security and control over the movement of goods. Stories such as these are common across groups of Demobilised FN that were not integrated into the army. As mentioned above, it was common practice for these individuals to collect fallen items and pieces of equipment, using them either immediately to demonstrate authority, or holding on to them in the hopes of future benefits.

Motivations for Claims-Making

When directly asking Demobilised FN why they felt compelled to be highly engaged in claims-making, the responses were consistent: unfulfilled promises for participation in the FN rebellion, personal debts accrued during the rebellion, and finally, civilians (illegitimately) receiving benefits through networks of patronage.

⁵⁶² Captain at Ministry of Defence, interview with the author in Abidjan-Plateau, September 19, 2016, in-person.

When discussing the issue of unfulfilled promises, demobilised FN consistently insisted that promises were made by the FN leadership about compensation that would be provided in the post-crisis period, which has not yet been received by these individuals. The exact promises remain undisclosed, with claims-makers stipulating their nature in public demonstrations of claims-making. Often, the Ouagadougou Peace Agreements of 2007, the peace agreements that vaguely laid out the necessity of military integration and demobilisation, were brought up as supporting evidence that promises were left unfulfilled. Demobilised FN claims-makers often argued that the Ouagadougou agreements had specific provisions for them, sometimes citing financial sums, promises of integration into employment, and housing—figures that were not mentioned in the agreements. References to the “Ouaga 4”, which locally refers to the Fourth Supplementary Agreement, was brought up several times across interviews with Demobilised FN, in newspaper interviews with FN Integrated mutineers, but never with Gbagbo supporters, who had equal stakes in the Ouagadougou agreements. However, when examining the Ouagadougou agreement and its four supplementary agreements, it makes no such promises or provisions for participants of the 11-year political crisis. When asked about the peace deal that the mutinous soldiers often referred to, the head of the national human rights organisation responded the following.

Nowhere has this been foreseen by the Ouagadougou agreements, maybe they are secret agreements, which are different from those we know. What we do know is that we had to take men from ex-FDS and ex-FAFN to form a homogeneous army to secure the electoral process. Nowhere did we see that we had to pay money to soldiers. We are amazed that today we are hearing about the Ouagadougou agreement.⁵⁶³

The frequent reference to the Ouagadougou agreements, demonstrate that demobilised FN fighters generally had an unclear understanding of the agreements. It is likely that they heard about the agreements through informal

⁵⁶³Pierre Adjoumani Kouamé, Président of *la Ligue ivoirienne des droits de l'Homme (Lidho)*, in an interview made public on January 22, 2017; “Côte d’Ivoire: Les primes versées aux militaires ne sont pas ‘prévues dans les accords de Ouagadougou’,” Responsable ONG ITW, January 22, 2017, <http://news.abidjan.net/h/608251.html>.

communication channels, perhaps amongst friends or through their informal networks, and used it as justification to push their claims forward. With the undisclosed nature of the promises made to FN supporters during the time of rebellion, much speculation and inconsistency surrounds the claims put forth by these individuals. Self-proclaimed EFA fighters, for instance, maintain that they were told that their training had made them into “unconditional military [recruits], regardless of education.”⁵⁶⁴ Promises allegedly made to these fighters include: army integration with official rank, a vehicle, a house, and 30,000,000 F CFA (approximately £ 40,500).⁵⁶⁵ These respondents vividly recount being sent back to Abidjan during the post-electoral crisis, in support of the EFA project without weapons and told to ‘figure it out’. To do so, they stole weapons from police—a story that is consistent with the popular legend that surrounds the Commando Invisibles. To date, these respondents have not received any promised compensation.⁵⁶⁶ Similarly, a different self-proclaimed EFA fighter, explained during separate interview, that he was promised unconditional army integration as a non-commissioned officer, a vehicle, 300,000 F CFA (approximately £400.00), and a house.⁵⁶⁷ In this particular account, the 300,000 F CFA was the sum that was to be paid for each ECOMOG soldier, had the FN rebellion paid ECOMOG forces to take down Gbagbo. In lieu of paying for ECOMOG forces, this account pledges that the FN leadership opted rather to ‘keep it local’ and pay the same sums to their own FN-supporting residents. Finally, a third self-proclaimed EFA fighter listed the promises he had received, including 300,000 F CFA, a house, guaranteed personal security following the crisis, and medical attention.⁵⁶⁸ Across all three accounts, all from individuals proclaiming to have come from the EFA group at relatively similar times, the variation in what was promised to each individual is notable. While the promises allegedly made during the rebellion were largely consistent across different groups of FN supporters, significant discrepancies

⁵⁶⁴EFA Fighter, interview with the author in Abidjan-Abobo, September 26, 2016, in-person.

⁵⁶⁵EFA Fighter, interview with the author in Abidjan-Abobo, September 26, 2016, in-person.

⁵⁶⁶ EFA Fighter, interview with the author in Abidjan-Abobo, September 26, 2016, in-person.

⁵⁶⁷ EFA Fighter 2, interview with the author in Abidjan-Attécoubé, December 23, 2016, in-person.

⁵⁶⁸ EFA Fighter 3, interview with the author in Abidjan-Attécoubé, December 23, 2016, in-person.

existed in the sum of financial compensation and the justification for its payment, as evident from the examples above. In the second example given, the ECOMOG bonus, the claims came only a few weeks before the first mutiny in which the mutineers made the same claims. What is clear from these accounts is that the basis for claims-making consistently evoked their participation and pay-outs to our integrated peers, while the details gave sufficient room for variation at the individual level. The demands of the mutineers could have easily been picked up through local media outlets, except that these individuals spoke of these claims days before the first mutiny of 2017 took place. What is more likely, is that information of a looming mutiny was communicated to somebody outside the FACL, who then shared the information with their networks. This would help explain why the main lines of argument remain the same, but the details became skewed. While this research was limited in its ability to collect more information on the possible flow of information between mutineers and individuals seeking compensation, the idea of networks and communication through vertical linkages of ex-combatants is an intriguing area of research to be further developed.

For the respondents interviewed above, claims-making became a legitimate course of action when they began to see inconsistencies in the way promises were being fulfilled, sometimes with friends and family taking the place of veritable fighters. For some FN supporters however, the pursuit of their financial compensation was motivated beyond reasons of outstanding promises. Over the course of multiple interviews and discussions, one demobilised FN respondent detailed the personal debts that he had amassed during the rebellion and was now being harassed to honour. This respondent described the ways in which debts accumulated for those aligning themselves to the rebellion, whether to support the northern cause or simply for personal profit. In the following excerpt, the respondent describes a hypothetical case of an individual aligned to the FN rebel governance, one that he deemed representative of this plight.

Here is somebody that spent years in the rebellion, without a salary. He has family. In Africa, the big family is the mother, the

father, the wife, the kids, the cousins. There is all of that, so there is responsibility. He spent all these years possibly looting to feed them, swindling to feed them. Stealing to feed them. He might have been living in a house that he didn't pay for, imposing himself in the house of others. And yeah, he didn't pay the electricity, the water, all the while the civilian who was not a rebel had to pay. So, it led to more people profiting that were not rebels. Those fooling around evidently don't need to pay. But the civilian has to pay taxes. Voila! So, it created a frustration between the rebels and those who lived in the zones of the rebellion. Civilians didn't like the rebels. Those with rebel parents would go and loot the one without rebel parents to go feed his family. We saw it, we heard of cases like this. Because a rebel has a weapon, [and he can demand 'presents' "*donne-moi 200, c'est cadeau*"]. [The civilian] is obligated to give it to him.⁵⁶⁹

Elaborating further, the same respondent then discussed why the 800,000 F CFA (approximately £1,000), the sum allotted to those registered in the national DDR programme as 'ex-combatant,' simply did not suffice:

Today we are nearing the end of the job, and we free everyone with the 800,000 F CFA. Everybody now feels like they are on the same level. The one that I commanded yesterday, that I insulted, that I humiliated, that couldn't talk back because I had my Kalash in hand. Today he knows that I no longer have my Kalash and that we can speak as equals, and that I slept in his house for years, he will tell me "pay for my house! If you don't I will kick you out!" He has a point. Or even "you took my bag that day!" and you go to the gendarmerie to explain and you say "yes, but I was a rebel" and they tell you that you are not above the law and you have to pay it back. Is it with the 800,000 that you will pay it back?⁵⁷⁰

The same respondent then went into personal details, signifying that this story was possibly based on his own experiences.

The third common motivation emerging across interviews with both FN supporters and their opponents was that of civilians gaining post-crisis benefits typically reserved for ex-combatants. Individuals highlighted the need for friends in influential places when discussing this matter—an issue more closely

⁵⁶⁹ FN ex-combatant gatekeeper, Interview with the author in Abidjan-Yopougon, September 30, 2016, in-person.

⁵⁷⁰ FN ex-combatant gatekeeper, Interview with the author in Abidjan-Yopougon, September 30, 2016, in-person.

related to the expectation of clientelistic governance than of a fair distribution. Across all interviews in which it was discussed, was the perception that many individuals were profiting from the 'ex-combatant' status despite never having participated or having been associated with the northern rebellion. Allegations typically cited examples of army integration, in which respondents claimed that friends and family of the ruling government were integrated into key posts, to the detriment of veritable fighters whom those posts were reserved for. In these explanations, regular civilians are presumed to have either paid their way into these positions or to have benefited from personal relationships with influential authorities. One individual with significant insight into the issue of civilians taking ex-combatant status commented in the following way:

This person did not suffer, did not participate, then lied, then got the same benefits as the combatants got. Maybe he had money and he bought a weapon. He informed himself [on the details of the conflict], he came and lied to the [authorities], and he won. He did not fight, but he found a hole to enter the programmes and to benefit from the things a combatant got. [The combatant] suffered and deserves it. He [the civilian] did not suffer, therefore, does not deserve it.⁵⁷¹

This individual's comments mirrored the feelings expressed by many respondents throughout this research that false claims were being made to gain financial benefits. To add a bit more context to this quotation, however, the respondent was a *Jeune Associés* who is also known to have found ways to extend financial benefits for ex-combatants to civilian friends and contacts, all the while taking a cut of the money they would eventually gain. This individual, therefore, benefitted himself from the very situation he laments. Furthermore, as illustrated in the previous paragraph's quotation from the respondent, not only have civilians taken advantage of the post-conflict situation financially, but civilians themselves were taken advantage of and might feel entitled to some reciprocity. In this logic, it might be difficult to see fraudulent claims of combatant status gaining financial benefits, while they were not involved. Yet, it is very difficult to draw any stark conclusions. As mentioned earlier, involvement in the FN rebellion was not restricted to armed conflict. For the

⁵⁷¹ FN ex-combatant gatekeeper, Interview with the author in Abidjan-Yopougon, September 30, 2016, in-person.

most part, it operated as a parallel government with financial and administrative branches. The difference between civilian and combatant, within the FN, is, for the most part difficult to trace, as described in Chapters 4 and 6. This means that identities were complex and somewhat fluid and that some individuals managed to move between multiple identities, often to their own financial benefit. Nevertheless, this third possible motivation—that of civilians taking ex-combatant labels to benefit financially—stands in contrast to the two previous reasons and shows considerable degrees of extortion. The third motivation, however, was the one most frequently identified by respondents from the Gbagbo and FN groups, as well as civilian Ivoirians approached during this research.

Positioning and Re-positioning

The act of positioning and re-positioning was observed frequently with demobilised FN ex-combatants. The practice, often to increase chances of survival and to improve livelihoods, however, is common. Similar observations were made in Guinea-Bissau by anthropologist Henrik Vigh, who conceived of similar patterns as “social navigation”. Vigh’s concept of social navigation is closely linked to the term “*dubriagem*”, which in the Guinean-Bissau context means “the act of making the most of a situation and making things work to one’s advantage.”⁵⁷² As such, it implies the ability, and willingness of individuals to tacitly navigate spaces of opportunity created in contexts of war, or opened by other people, in an effort to improve their livelihoods.⁵⁷³ It is mainly used to describe the efforts that youth have put into surviving and trying to forge a future for themselves in wartime situations.⁵⁷⁴ More broadly, the act of positioning and re-positioning resonates with Vigh’s concept more broadly.

We simultaneously act and react in relation to our current position within a social terrain, in response to current constraints,

⁵⁷² Henrik Vigh, “Youth Mobilisation as Social Navigation. Reflections on the Concept of Dubriagem,” *Cadernos de Estudos Africanos* 18, no. 9 (2010): 150.

⁵⁷³ Vigh, “Youth Mobilisation as Social Navigation. Reflections on the Concept of Dubriagem,” 153.

⁵⁷⁴ Vigh, “Youth Mobilisation as Social Navigation. Reflections on the Concept of Dubriagem,” 142.

possibilities and configurations of power, as well as in relation to our perception of the future terrain and its unfolding.⁵⁷⁵

The quotation above explains that acts of positioning and re-positioning are fairly mundane and common to a variety of situations. In the post-conflict context of Côte d'Ivoire, in one of the most compelling interviews, a respondent offered a long and emotional description of their frustration with the post-crisis distribution of resources and his attempts to position and re-position themselves within the situation. Rooted in perceptions of inconsistent integration of veritable fighters and the practices of clientelistic transactions, claims-making beyond this demobilised FN's national DDR allotment was completely justified. This interview is significant because the respondent represents another thread of shape-shifting behaviour that was observed amongst a handful of ex-combatants on the margins.

To better understand this phenomenon of positioning and re-positioning, it is necessary to explain the history of the respondent. The individual was a strong supporter of the FN, spending much of his time in the northern-controlled territories and volunteering to support the ComZones in the area. The exact role of the respondent during the FN rebellion is unclear, with varied accounts over the years suggesting that he was likely one of the opportunistic volunteers previously described. During the initial years of the post-conflict period, this individual resided amongst groups of *Jeunes Associés*, claiming to have assisted the ComZones stabilise Abidjan after the crisis. From there, the individual gained employment in a national post-crisis recovery programme for between two-to-three years and was soon to complete their contract. While conducting interviews in his personal residence, pieces of FRCI military uniform were hung over the doorway in a way to display and signal to the community that they had military ties.⁵⁷⁶ By triangulating different accounts from both this individual and his colleagues, this trajectory best matches that of the *Jeune*

⁵⁷⁵ Vigh, "Youth Mobilisation as Social Navigation. Reflections on the Concept of Dubriagem," 159.

⁵⁷⁶ Field notes and multiple interviews with Ivorian Former ADDR staff in Yopougon-Abidjan, multiple dates between July 2016 - June 2017.

Associés who volunteered themselves as attachés to the FRCI, collecting pieces of uniform in the hopes of being integrated.

Over the course of the year in which data collection took place, this respondent had positioned and re-positioned himself based on his perception of where the best access to compensation was. This respondent, across multiple interviews, suggested that they were an original member of the rebellion before 2002, that they controlled highway entry and exit points within the northern-held areas, that they were the commander of the *Jeune Associés*, and finally, that they were considered one of the real Commando Invisibles. During discussions after that, he became an EFA fighter. Towards the end of our discussions, he then revealed that he was a *Jeunes Associés*, residing in one of the abandoned buildings of Yopougon. This last identity was cross-checked with international practitioners familiar with his case, who said he likely was a *Jeunes Associés*. This individual reasoned that any civilian could make claims reserved for veritable ex-combatants such as army integration of financial compensation, on account of the allegations of civilian friends and family benefitting, either through bribes or through personal connections. Simply stated, if any civilian was allowed to benefit, even if in non-disclosed ways, from integration and other benefits, then claims-making under the title of 'ex-combatant' was a legitimate course of action for the whole of the FN rebellion. This argument was further stretched to blur the boundaries between those who were identified as ex-combatants but were allegedly too old or physically unfit to integrate the army. In their case, those individuals would also be able to lay claim for increased financial compensation since they had only received the benefits allotted to ex-combatants, when, according to the respondent, they should be entitled to the same pay and benefits as integrated combatants.

While the blurred lines between combatant and civilian are undeniable in the case of the FN rebellion, one can easily see that some claims-makers from the Demobilised FN group can, and have, easily shifted from one identity to the next. While the claims they put forth are similar, inconsistencies in wartime accounts and identities were observed to be the defining characteristic

of individuals from this category of FN supporter. Perhaps more interesting than the repositioning, was one response in which a respondent explained when they deemed a public event opportune for staking claims. When asked how this respondent chose which demonstrations to attend and which claims to align themselves to, they responded that it all depended on which were about to make breakthroughs. As it was too risky to be seen at all demonstrations, across all claims-making ex-combatant groups, they ran the risk of being identified by state authorities as a trouble-maker. Rather, this individual chose to sit back and to watch which claims were advancing, and to join them and their script at a ripe time.⁵⁷⁷ When observing that the claims by their most recent closest group, the *Cellule 39* were not gaining traction, this respondent shifted blame to international and government actors. According to him, both the international and government actions were colluding to fill their pockets with friend-based favours to the detriment of genuine local ex-combatants.⁵⁷⁸ According to them, all employed in the programme, except for this person, were complicit in taking money away from the real combatants. Only three months prior, when this *Jeunes Associés* believed that they would obtain an extension in employment, they aggressively defended the national authorities and international partners, stating that any financial compensation at all, should be seen as a bonus that was nobody was obligated to give. During this time of alignment with the post-conflict recovery programmes, the respondent praised the national authorities and the international community, stating that all instances of claims-making were well handled and that those staking claims lacked substantial reasons and proof.⁵⁷⁹ The positioning and re-positioning of this individual further supports both claims of opportunistic individuals within the ranks of the Demobilised FN, but also demonstrates a resource-driven motivation for political engagement rather than satisfaction that the northern cause had ultimately prevailed. This stands in contrast to the Gbagbo supporters and their approach in the post-conflict period, where groups largely retrained from making claims and stand in solidarity politically. For many of the

⁵⁷⁷ FN ex-combatant gatekeeper, Interview with the author in Abidjan-Yopougon, May 25, 2017, in-person.

⁵⁷⁸ FN ex-combatant gatekeeper, Interview with the author in Abidjan-Cocody, January 11, 2017, in-person.

⁵⁷⁹ FN ex-combatant gatekeeper, Interview with the author in Abidjan-Cocody, October 25, 2016, in-person.

Demobilised FN interviewed, it seemed as though their motivations for claims-making stemmed more from access to resources than from the northern cause.

Recreating Systems of Patronage

Over the course of the year, various respondents voiced similar sentiments about the post-crisis distribution of army posts. Perceptions of posts being distributed along lines of loyalty were echoed across groups of university students, community members, and professors. These perceptions were, unsurprisingly, present across the ex-combatant groups as well, and when combined, these perceptions illustrate the continued re-establishment of systems of patronage. A telling example lending much credence to the above-mentioned perceptions is that of an Abidjan-based strongman who is believed to have significantly influenced the recruitment processes of integration for the armed forces, particularly for the recruitment of penitentiary guards, '4x4'.⁵⁸⁰ After the assassination of IB, ruling authorities aligning themselves to the Soro camp sometimes insisted that 4x4 was the actual leader of Commando Invisibles, and therefore, knew of all the actual fighters in the 2010-11 post-electoral crisis in Abidjan.⁵⁸¹ In this telling, 4x4 was the rightful creator of ex-combatant lists for the Abidjan area. Allegations against 4x4, however, put forth by a number of individuals, describe a process in which lists of ex-combatants were filled with the names of relatives and friends, to the detriment of the now protesting ex-combatants. Shedding light on the process, the gatekeeper of the FN supporters declared with a slight grimace:

And 4x4, who represented Abidjan and around, he put them into the customs, into waters and forests, as penitentiary guards,

⁵⁸⁰ The name "4x4", pronounced "*quatre-quatre*" is used in this thesis to replace the actual alias of a well-known Abidjan-based strongman with close connections to the post-conflict regime. While other armed group leader's names are fully disclosed, this particular individual's is withheld as he is used in both Chapters 6 and 8 as an example of a potentially fraudulent leader.

⁵⁸¹ Ministry of Defence representative, informal discussion with the author in Abidjan-Plateau, December 16, 2016, in-person.

ONPC, so his guys left like that! They never fought a single day. No. For the most part, they didn't do a thing.⁵⁸²

Elaborating further, this individual extended the allegations beyond 4x4, describing how commanders would be approached by individuals asking to be on the list, giving money, and then getting validated through legitimate channels. While largely refraining from the issue of paying to make the list, the perception of friends and family being integrated by 4x4 was echoed across individuals from the Gbagbo-loyalist group.⁵⁸³

Linking the process of patronage with the continued protests by ex-combatants from the Demobilised FN group, one respondent from the Gbagbo supporters, a former FDS and leader of an Abidjan-based militia, lamented the placement of non-combatants into the military.

Unfortunately, those that really fought, it is not all of them that are in the army. But when they came to power, they started to take their [personal] relations, friends over here, there, that did not even participate. And why not? They did not participate, they were not there when they were needed. But now that your brother is an authority... so it's like that. So, this is why they continue to protest, to organise themselves, because many were not compensated."⁵⁸⁴

Such statements suggesting similar phenomena were made across all interviews regardless of political affinity, with particular emphasis on those who are currently making the most claims, the FN supporters. Beyond the ex-combatants integrated into the armed forces through regular post-conflict integration channels, the practice of individuals falsely claiming ex-combatant status extended to EFA fighters and to the *Jeunes Associés*, with one EFA respondent describing how there were many "dishonest people" within the EFA group who took the names of veritable ex-combatants to get rich.⁵⁸⁵ For the *Jeunes Associés*, interviews consistently remarked how the possibility of regular civilians entering signalled to others that it was a way of getting money.

⁵⁸² FN ex-combatant gatekeeper, Interview with the author in Abidjan-Yopougon, September 30, 2016, in-person.

⁵⁸³ Gbagbo-supporter, Interview with the author in Edinburgh, October 31, 2015, in-person.

⁵⁸⁴ NL, interview with the author in Abidjan - Il Plateaux, August 18, 2016, in-person.

⁵⁸⁵ EFA Fighter 2, interview with the author in Abidjan-Attécoubé, December 23, 2016, in-person.

In their view, those who most likely fought stayed home, while those who did not presented themselves as genuine beneficiaries. In other words, “*Il y a toujours des truccages!*”, or, “there are always tricks”.⁵⁸⁶ For many respondents with questionable ties to the armed crisis, the mere perception of civilian individuals benefitting from the programmes was justification for on-going protests. In this sense, a payment to one inevitably opens the door to all.

In a conflict that saw very little armed confrontation and mass civilian support for their preferred political cause, the lines between combatant-support and regular civilian support were undoubtedly blurred. Many civilians with very little knowledge of the crisis or of the actors also fancied themselves combatants, as made evident by a series of interviews with civilians who showed no hesitation in framing themselves as ‘ex-combatants’ when prompted. These individuals considered their experiences of living through the crisis alone as sufficient grounds to be considered an ‘ex-combatant’. Two examples of this come are of a traditional healer with northern Ivoirian roots, as well as an Imam who worked in Abobo, the ethnic stronghold of the northern rebellion in Abidjan. For the former, benefits should be given to him, as a self-identifying ex-combatant, as he had morally supported the northern cause.

Yes, I supported. [...]. If you wrote my name amongst the combatants, there would not be a problem! I supported them, I was behind them [...]. I would love to enter [the FACI army]!⁵⁸⁷

In the case of the latter, the Imam explained that his role is promoting themes of reconciliation and unity within his mosque constituted veritable ‘ex-combatant’ experience.

Me, I consider myself a veritable ex-combatant. Why? Because when you speak of atomic bombs, all of that, all of that is less soothing than prayer. Prayer is the first soother. Because when you fire on someone, the bullet could [penetrate] or not, but the prayer will for sure [penetrate]. So, it’s because of our prayer that peace and social cohesion have returned. This is our role as

⁵⁸⁶ *Jeunes Associés*, Group interview with the author in Abidjan-Attécoubé, December 27, 2016, in-person.

⁵⁸⁷ Dozo Traditional Healer, interview with the author in Abidjan-Abobo, August 10, 2016, in-person.

religious emissaries. Blessings, prayer, sacrifice, therefore, I consider myself to be a veritable ex-combatant.⁵⁸⁸

These statements illustrate the ways in which civilian perceptions of 'ex-combatant' labels are highly flexible and applicable to a multitude of experiences. More importantly, they are valuable and desirable. This is especially of note as there is ample academic research has demonstrated the stigma that can be attached to the label of 'ex-combatant' in both civil wars. In Sierra Leone, for instance, early research demonstrated that ex-combatants were reluctant to participate in a DDR programme because of the fear of discrimination and targeting that their status could bring.⁵⁸⁹ The case of Demobilised FN in Côte d'Ivoire demonstrates the exact opposite—that it is a desirable and useful label to advance one's financial interests in the post-conflict period.

While most claims above relate directly or indirectly to integration into the state security forces, the label of ex-combatant was observed to hold expectations of power and respect for individuals who aligned to it. Interviewing several groups of young FN supporters, respondents expressed disappointment that their official "ex-combatant" status, obtained through the national DDR programme, was not meeting their expectations. One group of respondents, in their early 20s, felt frustration over the lack of respect they were getting from state armed forces, particularly the military and gendarmes. In addition to granting respect, the label should have helped them to get jobs. The respondents described approaching military and gendarme personnel on the streets, telling them that they were also ex-combatants, only to get laughed at and called useless rather than being an equal.⁵⁹⁰ In this sense, the FN-supporting youth felt that it became a handicap. One youth explained that, "the disarmament card (ex-combatant ID) serves what purpose today? It's like a drug we took. I don't even see the importance in it anymore."⁵⁹¹ The label of 'ex-combatant' was similarly expected to hold a certain degree of recognition

⁵⁸⁸ Imam, interview with the author in Abidjan-Abobo, August 10, 2016, in-person.

⁵⁸⁹ Peters, "From Weapons to Wheels," 12-14.

⁵⁹⁰ FN-loyalist youth, group discussion 3 with the author in Port Bouët-Abidjan, December 28, 2016, in-person.

⁵⁹¹ FN-loyalist youth, group discussion 3 with the author in Port Bouët-Abidjan, December 28, 2016, in-person.

amongst older respondents. Similarly, one ex-combatant explained the following.

When two people go to the police, when one presents his ex-combatant papers, he will be taken more into consideration. But that alone is not sufficient, we are expecting more.⁵⁹²

The respondent further explained that the title of ex-combatant and the 800,000 F CFA received gives them more rights and legitimacy to engage in claims-making. The voice of those individuals who had no role in the conflict, but now have 'the papers' will be carried louder and further. For this respondent, the label of 'ex-combatant' was a source of pride, as he now feels that he has more of a platform to address the authorities.⁵⁹³

One possible further explanation for the embrace of the ex-combatant label amongst the Demobilised FN is that there was relatively little armed conflict with relatively few human rights violations in Côte d'Ivoire, when compared to most cases of armed conflict in the west African region. In this sense, there was less stigma associated with the label, as there was generally little bad behaviour attached to it. This finding suggests that the willingness of civilians to use the label of 'ex-combatant' is dependent, at least in part, on the amount of atrocities and damage caused by armed actors. In cases where levels of violence were low, the label may be seen more as a political affiliation and entitlement status to be distributed in the wake of political instability.

Conclusion

FN supporters who have been demobilised either through official DDR channels or entirely by themselves have prioritised various methods of group and individual claims-making as political engagement. Aligning themselves with those who currently are in power, this thesis posits that their relative proximity to state institutions and their continued allegiance to high-ranking political actors, greatly increases their bargaining power. The examination of the

⁵⁹² EFA Fighter 2, interview with the author in Abidjan-Attécoubé, December 23, 2016, in-person.

⁵⁹³ EFA Fighter 2, interview with the author in Abidjan-Attécoubé, December 23, 2016, in-person.

demobilised protests at the time of the integrated FN mutiny in May 2017, *Le Collectif* association, and the various individual attempts at maintaining awareness of opportunities for claims-making serve as telling examples of political engagement activities for those who consider themselves to be victors and who are within relatively closer proximity to institutions and individuals of influence than their Gbagbo-supporting counterparts and the Commando Invisibles. By mapping the claims-making activities of demobilised FN fighters, this chapter articulated and analysed why people choose one tactic over another, and why and when they choose collective action or individual actions.

Despite their multiple attempts, the self-identifying ex-combatants from the Demobilised FN categories have received little recognition from the ruling regime. Their political engagement activities have also been met with little success. This chapter proposes that the failure of the Demobilised FN to make gains is due to two primary reasons: a lack of support from their successful integrated peers, and an increasing degree of scepticism from the regime of who fought, who offered support, and who has opportunistic motives. The first conclusion is drawn from the example of the demobilised FN protest that occurred alongside the FN Integrated mutiny. Although making claims for essentially the same things and for the same reasons, the mutineers did not support their demobilised peers. Worse yet, they were hostile to them, resulting in a death of a demobilised FN at the hands of a mutineer who thought that the protesters were diluting their mutiny. Although the mutineers claimed to be making the demands on behalf of the 8,400 FN soldiers who integrated the military, they made no mention of both those FN who integrated other armed corps, as well as those FN who were demobilised. This first reason indicates a lack of cohesion amongst the ex-combatants of the FN. The second reason put forth by this chapter is that the authorities themselves might have been sceptical of claims from ex-combatants. As demonstrated in the later part of this chapter, the status of ex-combatant became very loose and some individuals inhabited identities when it seemed to their benefit. In the Ivorian context, individuals could have joined the conflict for a few days, or a few years. They could have actively fought or could have attended a weekly meeting pledging

support for the movements. This finding is also articulated by Chelpi Den Hamer in her description of Gbagbo supporters,⁵⁹⁴ and was further applied to groups of FN, particularly those from the *Jeunes Associés* and the EFA subgroups. The status is further confounded by allegations that friends and family benefitted from concessions reserved for 'combatants' of both sides. Taking the already blurred categories of FN supporters through its armed, financial, and administrative wings, it becomes nearly impossible to prove or disprove anybody's status, despite the low levels of violence incurred in the total 11-year crisis. It is important to recall the allegations of corruption in the integration process for the integrated FOCI forces. Should these allegations be true, then it is highly likely that true, battle-hardened FN combatants were left out. The numbers of people that fall into this category, however, is impossible to know, and further confounded by the claims of opportunistic individuals seeking financial compensation as well. This chapter, therefore, seeks to shed light on the blurred boundaries of ex-combatant and civilian, in the context of post-conflict Côte d'Ivoire, that has led to a proliferation of opportunists claiming different FN-affiliated identities, in accordance with which one makes the greatest gains. For many Ivoirians, the experience of having lived through the crisis alone was sufficient grounds for claiming ex-combatant status and making-claims for financial benefits. This phenomenon is further explored in Chapter 8, where demobilised FN specifically makes claims for the Commando Invisibles status.

Furthermore, despite their low success rate, the demobilised FN fighters continued to make claims to their political leaders, causing mild disruptions to post-conflict peace and security. If anything, this chapter demonstrates that the perceived right to make claims is not the same as being heard. While this thesis argues that ex-combatants aligned to the former FN rebellion engage more frequently and abrasively in claims-making due to their expectations of clientelistic rewards, that alone does not suffice in receiving pay-outs. It

⁵⁹⁴ Magali Chelpi-Den Hamer, "Les tribulations du dispositif Désarmement, démobilisation et réinsertion des miliciens en Côte d'Ivoire (2003-2015)," *Hérodote* 158, no. 3 (2015): 212.

recognises that facilitated opportunities alone are catalyst enough for continued mobilisation—particularly if the group experiences mild set-backs every time they engage.⁵⁹⁵ This chapter proposes that one of the factors that prompts the FN to continue to engage is that they see their military-integrated peers achieve success with the same basis as demobilised FN fighters. This argument follows Braithwaite et al. in that it recognises the power of successful examples elsewhere to show that mobilisation is possible and that it can produce positive outcomes.”⁵⁹⁶

As demonstrated by the passages above, the unique status attributed to the label of ‘ex-combatant’ has remarkably different meaning across groups of ex-combatants in Côte d’Ivoire. While the previous discussions in Chapter 5 revealed the Gbagbo supporter’s reluctance to leverage the label, this chapter on Demobilised FN demonstrates the contrary, suggesting that reminders of allegiance and related wartime experience serve as powerful tools to advance financial and professional interests. This chapter has shown that the label of ex-combatant is desired and useful in contexts such as this. Moreover, it demonstrated that the variation in methods of claims-making are largely dependent on where an individual finds themselves after the post-crisis distribution of posts. Taken together, these methods of claims-making, draw on reminders to the authorities that they supported them. This in turn, reinforces the perception of post-crisis governance shared with the Gbagbo supporters: that patron-client expectations remain largely intact and have influenced the way in which post-crisis stability has unfolded. As demonstrated by Chapters 6 and 7, it is likely the proximity of FN fighters that makes the difference in if their claims are successful or not. It would be most simple to say that the mere fact that the Integrated had access to weapons from within the armed forces made them a bigger threat, and, therefore, elicited an immediate response from the regime. This scenario, however, neglects the fact that former ComZones were called to participate in the negotiations, rather than simply their military and

⁵⁹⁵ A. Braithwait, J.M. Braithwaite and Kuck, “The Conditioning Effect of Protest History on the Emulation of Non-Violent Conflict,” 698.

⁵⁹⁶ A. Braithwait, J.M. Braithwaite and Kuck, “The Conditioning Effect of Protest History on the Emulation of Non-Violent Conflict,” 698.

government chains of command. Moreover, it neglects the fact that no soldiers who supported Gbagbo took to the streets. The proximity of the Integrated to these former rebel commanders, who now hold prominent positions in the state apparatus, grants them an inside track. This inside track is likely also the reason that many were integrated in the first place if we are to believe the many claims of demobilised FN that friends and family benefitted. The Demobilised FN, on the other hand, continue to sit at the margins of power. Regardless of the number of times they organise themselves, plan their claims, mirror the same claims as the Integrated, they seem unable to break through and generate the same response of their Integrated peers. This said, this thesis identifies the proximity of former FN fighters as the main factor in determining who has success and who does not. Finally, the frequent reference to the Ouagadougou agreements by Demobilised FN, despite a questionable grasp of its content, opens interesting avenues for future research. Such research could explore what ex-combatants understand, perceive, and expect from such agreements and could run parallel to studies such as this one.

Chapter 8: Commando Invisibles as Underground Ex-Combatants

While many observers consider the Commando Invisibles as part of the broader northern rebellion, this thesis recognises them as a distinct group with a unique post-conflict political trajectory. The Commando Invisibles fought in support of Alassane Ouattara and shared political affinities with the FN rebels. Despite this, the group's post-conflict political trajectory stands in stark contrast to the victors group, the FN supporters. Unlike the FN supporters, members of Commando Invisibles have not engaged in claims-making and have chosen rather to disengage from the political sphere altogether.

This chapter argues that the Commando Invisibles' choice of active political disengagement stems from their continued loyalty to a fallen ex-FN leader, Ibrahim Coulibaly (alias "IB"). Their FN counterparts, on the other hand, remained aligned and loyal to the eventual FN leader Guillaume Soro, who went on to become the President of the National Assembly. Accordingly, members of the Commando Invisibles have both observed and continue to expect that opportunities in the post-conflict period will be more easily accessed by those aligned with the victorious pro-Soro camp in the FN rebellion. The case of the Commando Invisibles reveals that political loyalties to Ouattara alone did not suffice. Rather, it was the loyalties to the fractured leadership within the FN rebellion that shaped post-conflict political trajectories. This finding reinforces the central argument of both clientelism and proximity to those in power as a driving force behind ex-combatant political engagement. This chapter also reinforces the argument that ex-combatants with favourable outcomes and access to concessions, rather than the most battle-hardened and disenfranchised, posed the greatest threat to post-conflict stability. Despite the Commando Invisibles being the most battle-hardened group in Côte d'Ivoire, they have been largely side-lined by the post-conflict regime and face constant fears of reprisal.

Throughout this chapter, the Commando Invisibles are presented through a series of narratives captured during fieldwork. Narratives originating from the remaining commanders of the Commando Invisibles and their closest ex-combatants are referred to as “original”. The identification of “original” Commando Invisibles was made possible through connections made by international practitioners who worked directly with the group upon the return of the remaining commanders from exile in 2015. Their identities were further cross-checked with early photos of the rebellion and post-electoral crisis, as well as with senior officers from the Ivoirian armed forces. Alternative claims about the status of the Commando Invisibles have the designation “alternative narrative” in order to signal a version of history derived from government officials and other groups of ex-combatants. This chapter also makes frequent use of the word ‘allegedly’, as much of the information surrounding the Commando Invisibles and the early exploits of the coup-makers from 1999 onwards is yet to be publicly confirmed. While this thesis cannot confirm nor deny the Commando Invisibles leader’s role in the turmoil described below, public perception of his involvement has significantly influenced how ex-combatants self-identify in the post-conflict period. This chapter equally reveals that individuals who are willing to use the Commando Invisibles identity as a vehicle of claims-making, while the original members refrain, do so with the knowledge that they do not have any ties to the violence committed by the group, and, therefore, are unlikely to face heavy reprisals from the regime.

Actor Background: Commando Invisibles

Under the leadership of the former leader of the FN rebellion, Ibrahim Coulibaly (“IB”), the Commando Invisibles emerged as an armed group in Abidjan during the post-electoral crisis of 2010-2011. They are known for their covert armed attacks against Gbagbo’s state forces and are unique because their combatants have managed to remain mostly anonymous within their host community of Abobo. While most Commando Invisibles fighters were

predominantly active during the post-electoral crisis, the formation of the group is rooted in the political rupture of the FN rebellion in 2004, which pitted followers of the military leader IB against the spokesperson and eventual rebellion leader, Guillaume Soro.⁵⁹⁷

Speculation around the membership and the activities of these combatants during the early years of the rebellion are exemplified around a handful of key events. In June 2004, for instance, unknown assailants launched an attack on the convoy of Guillaume Soro, alongside an attack on two military barracks in the northern town of Korhogo.⁵⁹⁸ Although much speculation surrounds these events, the perpetrators are generally understood to originate from the IB camp of the rebellion and are said to have suffered harsh punishment within the FN for their alleged actions. Two events related to the alleged reprisals they faced within the FN are the lynching of former IB-affiliated commander Kassoum Bamba (alias “Kass”), as well as 231 other deaths, 60 of which suffocated to death while locked in a shipping container in the northern zone of Korhogo.⁵⁹⁹ Tensions flared between the rival camps again in 2007, when there was an attempted attack on an aircraft carrying Soro. The attack was declared an assassination attempt by IB and his followers to regain control of the rebellion.⁶⁰⁰ Following these events, and the eventual departure of IB from the rebel-controlled territories, multiple accounts of IB’s whereabouts circulated. Some people spoke of his arrests in France, others of his exile in Burkina Faso or in Ghana, while others insist on Benin. The next time IB publicly re-emerged was in 2010 as the leader of the mysterious Abidjan-based Commando Invisibles.

⁵⁹⁷ International DDR practitioner, interview with the author in Abidjan-II Plateaux, February 16, 2015, in-person; Marie Miran-Guyon, *Guerres mystique en Côte d'Ivoire: Religion, patriotisme, violence (2010- 2013)* (Paris: Karthala, 2015), 60. The choice of words “military leader” and “leader” are simplified. In its nascent years, IB was the head of the FN rebellion, as it focused mostly on military activities such as the 19 September attacks and securing the partition of the country. As the rebellion developed, it encompassed political and economic spheres as well, resulting in shifts of leadership. Multiple interviews with individuals from the Commando Invisibles, the FPI, the FN-loyalists, and several newspaper articles identify IB as the original leader of the FN rebellion, and Soro initially as the spokesperson and then official leader.

⁵⁹⁸ Mike McGovern, *Making war in Côte d'Ivoire*, (Chicago, London: The University of Chicago Press, 2011), 21.

⁵⁹⁹ Miran-Guyon, *Guerres mystique en Côte d'Ivoire*, 60.

⁶⁰⁰ International DDR practitioner, interview with the author, February 16, 2016, in person.

Leading into the post-electoral crisis, the Commando Invisibles formed its base in the northern-dominated Abidjan commune of Abobo, where it shared the same broad 'northern' ethnic identity and held general support for the northern cause. During the post-electoral crisis, the original Commando Invisibles describe carrying out their attacks exclusively in Abobo, due to their limited capacity both in terms of manpower and weaponry. Consequently, they lacked the resources necessary to extend their operations to neighbouring communes.⁶⁰¹ During the same discussion, the original Commando Invisibles further explained that throughout its existence, the group had a clear hierarchy and military structure, and led a group of disciplined fighters who carried out targeted attacks against the state forces that were loyal to Gbagbo.⁶⁰² Their discretion was their strength, and it played into popular depictions of them as an "invisible" force. Alongside their attacks against key military installations, the Commando Invisibles are commonly known to have employed the tactic of ambush, where they lured in state security forces to relatively remote locations within the commune to attack them, taking their weapons and ammunition. The tactic of ambush is said to be one of the ways the group first acquired and subsequently replenished their weapon and ammunition stocks over the course of the post-electoral crisis.⁶⁰³ As a result of these attacks, the group effectively destabilised Gbagbo's forces, opening space for the commanders of the FN/FRCI⁶⁰⁴ to descend into Abidjan and complete the transfer of political power from Gbagbo to Ouattara.

Over the course of the post-electoral crisis from November 2010 to April 2011, the Commando Invisibles waged an urban battle that played an important role in the victory of the FN. Although Ouattara's electoral victory and subsequent protection were internationally endorsed during the early months

⁶⁰¹ Commando Invisibles, group discussion with the author in Abidjan-Abobo, October 10, 2016, in-person.

⁶⁰² Commando Invisibles, group discussion with the author in Abidjan-Abobo, October 10, 2016, in-person.

⁶⁰³ Commando Invisibles, group discussion with the author in Abidjan-Abobo, October 10, 2016, in-person; Ivorian Former ADDR staff, interview with the author in Abidjan, September 30, 2016, in-person. This thesis does not disregard the possibility of other sources of weapons. The tactic of ambush as stock replenishment is the one cited by local observers and the group itself.

⁶⁰⁴ The FN combatants had changed their official name to the Forces Armées de Côte d'Ivoire (FRCI) slightly before they began their push south into Abidjan.

of the crisis, the Commando Invisibles' efforts were critical to the FN/FRCI's entry into Abidjan. On The 11th of April 2011, FRCI forces captured Laurent Gbagbo, with the transfer of power being largely assisted by France and UN forces.⁶⁰⁵ A little over two weeks later, on the 27th of April 2011, IB was assassinated by the FRCI, resulting in the immediate dissolution of his original Commando Invisibles armed group. Following IB's assassination, remaining commanders of the Commando Invisibles took refuge in the UN peacekeeping mission for a month before going into exile in Ghana; in the meantime, their fighters are widely acknowledged to have either been jailed or to have gone underground.⁶⁰⁶ What is essential to retain is that the urban war waged in Abobo by the Commando Invisibles against the FDS forces of Gbagbo makes the Commando Invisibles the group with, arguably, the most battle experience. As they are the most battle-hardened fighters, they should also be the most likely spoilers of peace, should standing assumptions of ex-combatant behavioural risks be applied. IB's assassination, however, changed the trajectory of this group, subsequently rendering them side-lined and repressed.

The reasons for IB's assassination have varied from source to source. The following explanations are both normative opinions about whether his death was justified, and impressions about why the FRCI felt it necessary to kill him. For some, IB was assassinated for his alleged unwillingness to order his combatants to disarm, despite making the necessary calls to the national authorities to initiate the process.⁶⁰⁷ For others, IB's assassination was justified on account of his allegedly conspiring with pro-Gbagbo militias, rendering him untrustworthy.⁶⁰⁸ For others still, his assassination was necessary because of his personal political ambitions. In accounts frequently told by FN supporters who were integrated into the government and security forces, IB was

⁶⁰⁵ Richard Banégas, "Post-election crisis in Côte d'Ivoire: The gbonhi war," *African Affairs* 110, no. 440 (2011): 465.

⁶⁰⁶ Commando Invisibles, interview with the author in Abidjan-Abobo, October 1, 2016, in-person; Haby Niakate, "Côte d'Ivoire : Mamadou Sanogo, ex-membre du Commando invisible, détenu oublié," *Jeune Afrique*, September 24, 2015, <http://www.jeuneafrique.com/mag/264392/politique/Côte-divoire-mamadou-sanogo-ex-membre-du-commando-invisible-detenu-oublie/>

⁶⁰⁷ Radio France International, "IB Tuer par les forces d'Alassane Ouattara », April 28, 2011. <http://www.rfi.fr/afrique/20110428-ib-abattu-forces-alassane-ouattar>.

⁶⁰⁸ Gbagbo-supporter, Interview with the author in Edinburgh, October 31, 2015, in-person.

considered a threat to post-conflict stability. These informants also say he allegedly took over the national radio and television tower, RTI, to announce another coup before he was apprehended and neutralised.⁶⁰⁹ The general consensus within the larger society, however, is that his assassination was the result of an unresolved dispute with Soro, who went on to consolidate his power within the regime and whose loyal forces went on to be integrated into the official state security forces under the post-conflict government of Alassane Ouattara.⁶¹⁰

Stories surrounding IB and the Commando Invisibles remain, to this day unconfirmed. Little is known about the identity or number of the group's combatants beyond a few key commanders. What is acknowledged, however, amongst the majority of Ivoirians, regardless of their political convictions, is that IB is Côte d'Ivoire's most famous *putschiste*. The unofficial title stems from the alleged key roles that IB played in the coup of 1999 against Henri Konan Bédié, the 2000-coup attempt against Robert Guéï ("Cheval Blanc"), the second coup attempt in 2001 against Laurent Gbagbo ("Mercedes Noir"), and most prominently, in coordinating the FN rebellion in 2002.⁶¹¹ As a result, the lack of concrete information about the attacks and the identities of Commando Invisibles have created opportunities for individuals with similar political affinities and ethnic profiles to claim Commando Invisibles membership to obtain material compensation for the crisis-related activities of the original group. The mention of ethnic profile is important as it refers to the shared northern identities of those who supported the northern cause of the FN. The shared ethnic identity is the same as the core group of claims-makers and is possibly one of the reasons that Gbagbo supporters, of southern ethnic descents, have refrained from claiming Commando Invisibles membership to advance their interests.

⁶⁰⁹ International DDR practitioner, interview with the author in Abidjan-II Plateaux, February 16, 2015, in-person; Captain from Ministry of Defence, informal discussions with the author in Abidjan-Plateau, October 14, 2016.

⁶¹⁰ Multiple discussions with Ivoirians, including taxi drivers, teachers, political party gatherings, Abidjan- multiple communes, 2016.

⁶¹¹ Commando Invisibles, interview with the author in Abidjan-Abobo, October 1, 2016, in-person.

Post-Conflict Political Engagement: Active Disengagement

In the initial years of the post-conflict period, the combatants of the Commando Invisibles who remained in Abidjan made an effort to blend into society with little trace of their wartime identities or experiences.⁶¹² Following the assassination of IB and the exile of top commanders, the remaining combatants were leaderless and fearful of reprisals from both the Gbagbo supporters and the new national authorities, largely derived from the ranks of the Soro-aligned FN. That said, the original Commando Invisibles were absent from most post-conflict programmes such as armed forces integration- an absence that was due, in part, to their own perceptions of a post-crisis context that favoured the ComZones and Guillaume Soro's camp of the rebellion. Like previous chapters, it was the expectations of 'victor's justice' that influenced the decision to be politically active or inactive, regardless of empirical truths about who fought, for how long, and how equitable compensation should look.

As previous chapters demonstrated, from 2011-2017, the FN supporters were the most politically active group, frequently using the label of 'ex-combatant' to make claims for further conflict-related compensation. Alongside the FN supporters, the Gbagbo supporters remained mobilised through political party engagement activities. The Gbagbo supporters, however, did not leverage the 'ex-combatant' label to advance their interests. Because no specific event of claims-making or other broader political engagement activities were carried out by the Commando Invisibles during the post-conflict period from 2011 to 2017, the next question was whether they had participated alongside either of the other groups, either within the FPI political activities or through similar claims-making activities of the Integrated or Demobilised FN.

Since 2015, when the remaining leaders of the Commando Invisibles came out of exile and back to Côte d'Ivoire, there were no mentions in the local media of political engagement by this group. Additional research from 2011

⁶¹² Commando Invisibles, interview with the author in Abidjan-Abobo, October 1, 2016, in-person.

onwards, revealed that the lack of engagement traced back to the beginning of the post-conflict period since the fall of Gbagbo and the transfer of political power to Ouattara in April 2011. The constitutional referendum of the 30th of October 2016 was effectively leveraged by Gbagbo supporters to denounce the state and had no traces of involvement by Commando Invisibles combatants. Similarly, the Commando Invisibles combatants were absent during the mutinies of 2017, and were not overtly proclaiming their Commando Invisibles membership alongside the demobilised FN demonstrating on alongside the mutinies. After notable periods of political engagement, discussions held with one of the remaining commanders, as well as a handful of Demobilised FN claims-makers present at the sites, confirmed their absence at these notable events. This finding, then, led to additional questions: Was their absence deliberate? Did ex-combatants from the Commando Invisibles share the same expectations of “victor’s justice” as the other groups? For the greater Ivoirian society, claims-making by former FN fighters seemed natural as they supported the current regime and were now assumed to be facing a more sympathetic government. As the following sections will demonstrate, the sentiment of victor’s justice is nuanced and does not extend to dissident factions within the broader FN rebellion. The choice of the Commando Invisibles fighters to remain loyal to their fallen leader than to the more mainstream FN group reinforces the importance of personal loyalties to those in power, rather than merely being of similar political convictions.

Choosing Active Disengagement

Guided by the questions above, this section presents the fourth category of political engagement used by ex-combatants in post-crisis Côte d’Ivoire: active disengagement. Active disengagement refers to actions to deliberately refrain from any political engagement activity that seeks to advance one’s interests vis-à-vis the structures of the post-crisis State. It entails refraining from traditional political engagement methods such as political party activities, as well as from those of claims-making including writing letters, forming

associations, protesting, and armed mutiny. Understanding that the choice to participate politically is generally understood to be the product of free will, political equality, and agency,⁶¹³ the choice to actively disengage demonstrates people exercising those same factors to deliberately disengage from political life. Upon first glance, the choice of active disengagement resonates with Albert Hirschman's well-known work *Exit, Voice and Loyalty*.⁶¹⁴ As conceived by Hirschman, 'exit', in the context of a failing organisation, implies "inflicting revenue losses on delinquent management"⁶¹⁵ The losses incurred, when large enough, would then prompt management to reconsider its strategies and would eventually lead to change.⁶¹⁶ Applied to a case like Côte d'Ivoire's Commando Invisible, the act of 'exit' could be demonstrated by their unwillingness to engage politically, both in public and in private forums. The concept, however, assumes that the choice of withdrawing from the political sphere was done independent of external factors and was a product of free will—an uninhibited decision to withdraw support from, and participation in, the polity. The concept of 'exit' is compelling as it seems to explain this absence from the polity on the surface. Where the concept of 'exit' fits less well, in the case of the Commando Invisibles, is that it does not account for the persecution, real or imagined that the actors perceive. The explanations given by the original Commando Invisibles reveal that their choice of active disengagement was more out of fear of reprisals, than it was an act of freewill seeking to undermine those in power in the hopes of triggering change.

Disengagement from political action has been noted in several cases outside of Côte d'Ivoire. Where authoritarian rule prevails, for instance, political participation may be a way for citizens to demonstrate allegiance to the State, rather than their individual will. In Zambia, under the previous one-party state, withdrawal from participating in elections was locally equated to opposing to the

⁶¹³ Arend Lijphart, "Unequal Participation: Democracy's Unresolved Dilemma," *American Political Science Review* 91, no. 1 (1997): 1-14.

⁶¹⁴ Albert O. Hirschman, *Exit, Voice and Loyalty: Responses to Decline in Firms, Organisations, and State* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1970).

⁶¹⁵ Albert O. Hirschman, *Exit, Voice and Loyalty: Responses to Decline in Firms, Organisations, and State* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1970): 21.

⁶¹⁶ Hirschman, *Exit, Voice and Loyalty*, 23.

State.⁶¹⁷ Research from Zimbabwe demonstrated that educated segments of the population were more likely to disengage from political action in contexts of economic decline, when they perceived that providing input would be futile. Not only did they disengage from elections, but also from contacting their local politicians and attending community meetings. Education, as elaborated in the article, increased citizen's access to resources, and thus increased their ability to follow politics and offer critical examinations of it. Conversely, their increased awareness also made them more cynical of their power to shape domestic politics.⁶¹⁸ Whereas citizens from these cases may have disengaged due to futility or apathy, the case of disengagement in Côte d'Ivoire was more tied to the fear of persecution than to any other political strategy.

Similar to the cases listed above, the choice of active disengagement, as it was explained by the remaining original members of the Commando Invisibles, was an active political choice. Over the course of two separate group discussions, and a small number of phone interviews, notable events of political engagement were raised with the original members in the hopes of eliciting responses and positions specific to the Commando Invisibles. The topics brought up included the Constitution amendments of October 2016, the numerous ex-combatant protests, and the mutinies of 2017. When inquiring about the official stance and presence of original Commando Invisibles ex-combatants, the commander explained that he, as well as the remaining leadership, had given strict orders to their affiliated ex-combatants to refrain from participation. The order, he explained, went beyond these specific events and was to be applied to any public or private attempts of the ex-combatants to make claims to the state.⁶¹⁹ Furthermore, throughout these conversations, the commander prioritised a strategy of disassociating the group's name from public events of political engagement. The primary motivation, he explained,

⁶¹⁷ Daniel N. Posner, and David J. Simon, "Economic Conditions and Incumbent Support in Africa's New Democracies," *Comparative Political Studies* 35, no. 3, (2002): 330

⁶¹⁸ Kevin Croke, Guy Grossman, Horacio A. Larreguy, and John Marshall, "Deliberate Disengagement: How Education Can Decrease Political Participation in Electoral Authoritarian Regimes," *American Political Science Review* 110, no. 3(2016): 579.

⁶¹⁹ Commando Invisibles, interview with the author in Abidjan-Abobo, October 24, 2016, in-person.

was to ensure that the original members would not be associated with any events of public disturbance. Additionally, the prioritisation of refraining from any negative public image appeared to extend beyond these notable public events, including occasional personal provocations that the original members might face from their rivals. The commander specifically brought up provocations such as those carried out by individuals outside the group placing blame on the Commando Invisibles for past or present political unrest. The original members explained how many Ivoirians often placed blame on Commando Invisibles in times of instability, angering the youth of the original group who then felt the urge to respond defensively, which could possibly result in heightened tensions. The group knew it was important to remain steadfast regardless of provocation and considered it essential to remain calm and refrain from public demonstrations of might. Remaining calm would not only contribute to reducing tensions between the parties, but, more importantly, would ensure that negative attention from the authorities would not follow.⁶²⁰ In a context that continues to be perceived as insecure for the original members, drawing any negative attention their way might bolster the regime's ability to persecute the remaining original Commando Invisibles beyond what was done in the initial post-crisis years.

Based on the information gathered during the discussions, the original Commando Invisibles maintained a core group of loyal supporters. The population of the Commando Invisibles, at its peak in 2011, is difficult to trace, due to the hidden and 'invisible' nature of the group. Leading into the post-electoral crisis, and while fighting it, membership was deliberately kept secret, out of necessity as they inhabited the very communities of Abidjan that were under the scrutiny and heightened suspicion of Gbagbo's FDS forces and other Gbagbo supporters. Different individuals consulted within the group provided reassurance that the core members of the original group remained in close contact, and that there was still a strong sense of allegiance to its remaining leaders, as well as to their unique history. The orders they received about individual and group behaviour in the face of provocations were given in a top-

⁶²⁰Commando Invisibles, interview with the author in Abidjan-Abobo, October 24, 2016, in-person.

down manner, a characteristic of a cohesive group.⁶²¹ The remaining leadership, as well as the closest supporters, considered keeping a low profile to be in the interest of the group from a strategic point of view, with the aim of reducing the risk of potentially on-going persecution. The original Commando Invisibles' perception of possible persecution was significantly influenced by their immediate post-conflict experiences, some of which are explained below. Moreover, as the following sections demonstrate, the absence of the original Commando Invisibles from the public political scene has opened opportunities for other FN supporters to lay claims to the wartime experiences of the original Commando Invisibles, in the hopes of advancing their own personal interests in the post-conflict period.

Downfall and Persecution in the Post-Conflict Period

To better understand the original group's reluctance to engage politically or make claim on the same sorts of entitlements as their FN peers, it is essential to understand their downfall by their own account. Moreover, it is essential to understand the consequences of their absence in the immediate post-conflict period: the appropriation of their identities and wartime experiences by other actors.

From the early days of the northern rebellion, IB and his closest allies formed an integral part of the FN. In an interview with *Jeune Afrique*, IB and his loyal supporters stressed that regardless of disputes between the various rebel factions, they all had a shared goal of removing Gbagbo from power and obtaining equal rights and treatment for Ivoirians of northern descent. As explained by the original Commando Invisibles in this newspaper interview, despite the different loyalties to either Soro ("FN"), or IB (former "FN" and now Commando Invisibles), those who supported the northern rebellion and its presidential candidate Alassane Ouattara, were still brothers.⁶²² Members of

⁶²¹ Commando Invisibles, interview with the author in Abidjan-Abobo, October 24, 2016, in-person.

⁶²² Niakate, "Côte d'Ivoire."

the FN who were loyal to Soro, however, evidently did not reciprocate the feeling of brotherhood.

By their own account, the original Commando Invisibles told a narrative of infiltration and deception- a story that ultimately led to the assassination of their leader, IB. The account commences roughly a week before one of the battles of the post-electoral crisis,⁶²³ when one of the rank-and-file of the original Commando Invisibles, “*un petit*”, informed the leadership that he had some friends who wanted to fight alongside the Commando Invisibles. The proposed recruits were affiliated with one of the ComZones, Koné Zakaria, who, at some point, had also allegedly fallen out with the FN.⁶²⁴ Trusting the intentions of the newcomers and the word of *le petit*, the group integrated a handful of the newly-arrived combatants. Many of the new recruits held support roles to the original combatants, supplying water, cleaning-up temporary premises, and doing small-scale maintenance work. Additionally, some were tasked with maintaining an active presence within the Abobo territory. Amongst those who joined to fight was an individual named Féré. From the data gathered, Féré was an individual who did not *fight* with the Commando Invisibles, but who later went on to make claims of leading the group on public forums, likely in an effort to reap financial benefits that were expected to be paid equitably to all ex-combatants. The example of Féré is important to understand as it is reflective of a larger trend of identity appropriation in the immediate years following the post-electoral crisis. This trend, as well as more on Féré, is discussed in the following section. The account provided by the original Commando Invisibles recalls many of the new recruits, Féré amongst them, fleeing the sites of battle at the onset of armed exchange with the Gbagbo-supporting state forces. Before and after violent battle, however, the new recruits boasted the name of the Commando Invisibles group and their membership within it, despite never engaging in the armed struggle at any

⁶²³ The participants likely alluded to the infamous battle of PK 18, although this was not confirmed during the discussion.

⁶²⁴ Documentation on the falling-out of Kone Zakaria and the FN is, at the time of writing, yet to be found. The story of this ComZone’s temporary rift with the FN has only been brought up a handful of times during private conversations with gatekeepers.

point.⁶²⁵ Near the end of the post-electoral crisis, as the FN/FRCI arrived in Abidjan, the original Commando Invisibles described the start and increase of “*conneries*” (“bullshit”) committed by the new arrivals, likening their latest recruits to internal spies feeding information to the pro-Soro FN leadership.⁶²⁶

As previously mentioned, immediately following the death of IB, several of the original commanders took refuge in the UN peacekeeping mission.⁶²⁷ Once the remaining leadership left the streets of Abobo and their combatants went underground, the recently recruited *petits*, are understood to have collected the remaining military attire and equipment that they found on the streets- a common practice amongst both Gbagbo and FN supporters to increase their chances of integration into the armed forces.⁶²⁸ Such remnants likely belonged to the official state forces, the FRCI, or the original Commando Invisibles. With the original combatants no longer present, many of the last recruits and possibly other remnant-collectors proclaimed themselves as the original Commando Invisibles.⁶²⁹ Joining in on the identity-borrowing were individuals with similar ethnic profiles from neighbouring communes. While recounting the month spent in the UN peacekeeping mission, the original Commando Invisibles commander described with amused astonishment that it was only there, within the walls of the UN mission, that he first heard that there were “Commando Invisibles” in the neighbouring commune of Adjamé, a northern-dominated commune with a similar ethnic composition to Abobo.⁶³⁰ Adjamé, while undoubtedly a target of Gbagbo’s state forces, was characterised more by mob-style violence than by armed combat. By their own account, the original commander and his entourage emphasised how they never had the capacity to conduct their armed attacks outside of Abobo, thereby rendering any claims of Commando Invisibles in other communes false.⁶³¹

⁶²⁵ Commando Invisibles, interview with the author in Abidjan-Abobo, October 1, 2016, in-person.

⁶²⁶ Commando Invisibles, interview with the author in Abidjan-Abobo, October 1, 2016, in-person.

⁶²⁷ Commando Invisibles, discussion with the author in Abidjan-Abobo, 1 October 2016, in-person; International DDR practitioner, interview with the author in Abidjan-II Plateaux, February 16, 2015, in-person.

⁶²⁸ This is discussed at length in Chapters 5 and 7.

⁶²⁹ Commando Invisibles, discussion with the author in Abidjan-Abobo, 1 October 2016, in-person.

⁶³⁰ Commando Invisibles, discussion with the author in Abidjan-Abobo, 1 October 2016, in-person.

⁶³¹ Commando Invisibles, discussion with the author in Abidjan-Abobo, 1 October 2016, in-person.

The personal accounts of the original Commando Invisibles' downfall, the killing of IB, offers an explanation for the group's reluctance to be politically engaged in the post-conflict period. IB was known as the mastermind of Ivoirian coups, making his assassination all the more powerful for members of his group with less skill and strategy. Moreover, he was a charismatic leader, with his followers likely pledging as much allegiance to him, personally, as they did to the broader cause. Following his downfall, there was no clear succession, which at least in part, explains why the group disbanded. The allegations of infiltration and the subsequent dissipation of the group demonstrate that there is little trust between remaining Commando Invisibles and FN-supporter groups. This lack of trust, placed within a context largely understood to favour the FN victors, offers little incentive for the ex-combatants to raise their voice publicly in a secure manner without a perceived threat of persecution. The group's account of continued persecution helps explain why the group chose to deliberately refrain from political engagement activities exercised by their peers of the FN and counterpart Gbagbo supporters. Their absence on the post-conflict scene, however, provided opportunities for other individuals to make claims about the group's experiences and has led to a proliferation of alternative narratives purported by both individuals and newly integrated state authorities.

Alternative Narratives for Claims-Making

The swapping of wartime stories and identities was one of the most pervasive trends observed amongst former FN affiliates sitting at the margins of power. As previously discussed in Chapter 7, it was common for Demobilised FN to position themselves as a *Jeunes Associés* one day, a true FN fighter the next, and an EFA fighter at a later date. This trend equally encompassed the Commando Invisibles. This section outlines some of the different narratives that Demobilised FN used when claiming Commando Invisibles status. In the initial years after the post-electoral crisis, claims of Commando Invisibles status were

very public, most evident from the creation of YouTube videos to ‘set the record straight’. As individuals recognised that the label of Commando Invisibles was not as lucrative as expected, public declarations of status became less frequent and were reserved more for one-on-one interviews with foreigners. This doctoral research captured the last phase of label-borrowing, which presumably was a final effort to convince foreigners of their important wartime status. It was hoped, that by participating, additional lobbying would be done on their behalf within international circles. This last trend of identity-borrowing sheds important methodological light on processes of interviewing self-proclaimed ex-combatants by showing how, and under what circumstances, it might prevail.

One of the most publicly accessible cases of alternative Commando Invisibles claims has been put forth by the aforementioned Féré, now immortalized on YouTube as “Commander Féré”.⁶³² In the video, commander Féré and his entourage describe the origins of the Commando Invisibles, as well as the tactics used against Gbagbo’s state forces (slaughter with a knife for Féré, specifically). In a separate YouTube video that is over an hour in length, the same entourage describes in detail the ways in which they, the Commando Invisibles, waged battle by walking the audience watching the video to the locations of their attacks. To legitimise their story, they re-enact demonstrations of ritualistic objects that ensured victory over Gbagbo’s forces. The video complements these accounts with community testimonies assuring that Féré and his entourage were the genuine actors of the conflict.⁶³³ In both videos, Féré and his entourage make explicit claims that they are the original actors, that they were present and waged every battle, and most importantly, that IB imposed himself on their group towards the end of the crisis, in an attempt to take credit for their victory.

⁶³² “Commandant Féré, l’égorgéur des pro-Gbagbo a Abobo témoigne” (roughly translated as “Commander Féré, slaughterer of pro-Gbagbos speaks”), Youtube, accessed May 2, 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HPIs-ol1jal>

⁶³³ “Commando Invisibles”, Youtube, accessed May 2, 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YUXJvs6QEzo>

Alternative narratives where individuals claim membership in the Commando Invisibles went beyond the initial group of “*petits*,” now considered to be traitors by the original Commando Invisibles. Over the course of this project’s research, several respondents from the Demobilised FN sub-groups of *Jeunes Associés* and EFA ex-combatants insinuated that they held membership in the Commando Invisibles. In these narratives, the individuals began the interviews by proclaiming membership in the Commando Invisibles and then would develop a narrative of being forgotten and left behind when it came to post-crisis financial compensation. As the discussions developed, these respondents later revealed that they considered themselves to be EFA fighters or *Jeunes Associés*, morally denouncing IB and his alleged malicious motives for Côte d’Ivoire. Reinforcing these narratives were other individuals from the same social networks, claiming to have been members of both the Commando Invisibles, and later, upon failing a basic questioning of facts, the demobilised *Jeunes Associés*. These individuals explained that because the original Commando Invisibles had been disarmed and the group ceased to exist, these individuals were amongst the last remaining ex-combatants to be neglected by the state and deprived of their wartime compensation.⁶³⁴

Additional discussions held with self-proclaimed EFA ex-combatants, individuals sometimes began their interviews suggesting, and sometimes overtly declaring, that they were part of the original Commando Invisibles. When asked about the leadership, they pledged allegiance to an individual named “Dosso,” who also featured in a YouTube video self-proclaiming to be the lead of the Commando Invisibles.⁶³⁵ In this alternative narrative, the individuals insisted that they were independent from the pro-Soro camp of the rebellion and confidently declared their leader as Dosso only after a question was asked about him in the interview. Upon hearing the name, both respondents nodded, agreeing that Dosso was their leader when they fought as the Commando Invisibles. The message that these individuals wished to

⁶³⁴ Ivoirian Former ADDR staff /*Jeunes Associés* representative, interview with the author in Abidjan, September 30, 2016, in-person.

⁶³⁵ Documentation of Dosso was similarly obtained on YouTube, with Dosso self-proclaiming leadership of the group. The link has recently been removed, as well as other YouTube traces of these claims.

convey most strongly was that they were forgotten hardened fighters, and that one day, it would take very little to remobilise themselves and to destabilise the country.⁶³⁶ The type of identity and the discourse of ruthless and volatile fighters that was used by these respondents is important for two reasons. First, it demonstrates the willingness of these individuals to position and re-position themselves according to where they think the biggest gaps in a narrative to be, and where the biggest opportunities for benefit lie. Similar actions were seen and discussed in Chapter 7 where Demobilised FN sometimes jumped from one armed group identity to the next, in an attempt to make their pleas stronger. As these individuals come from the same ethnicity and background as those who traditionally supported the FN and the larger northern cause, this could be seen as a type of armed group appropriation. Second, as was the case of Demobilised FN, these individuals knew the importance of the threat of violence and were using the mystique of the Commando Invisibles in similar ways by advancing images of themselves as ruthless and volatile individuals. Reminders of their allegedly forgotten status and their precarious existence were likely used to demonstrate a sense of urgency to their audiences. The narratives provided by these individuals shed light on the willingness of respondents to mislead those who they consider to be outsiders by simply claiming ex-combatant status. While this thesis is unable to quantify the number of times that outsiders, and in particular researchers, have been misled by similar individuals in the field, these interviews show the length to which some respondents are willing to go to make their claims of ex-combatant status.

In another account, an individual contracted by the government through the national DDR programme declared with confidence that the original Commando Invisibles had ceased to exist as a group. In this alternative narrative, the respondent, a weapons collector, purported to have personally collected the weapons of IB's original Commando Invisibles, who were allegedly residing amongst the Demobilised FN sub-group of *Jeunes Associés*.

⁶³⁶ EFA fighter 2, interview with the author in Abidjan-Attécoubé, December 23, 2016, in-person; EFA fighter 3, interview with the author in Abidjan-Attécoubé, December 23, 2016 in-person. These interviews were conducted separately one after the other in different locations of the commune of Attécoubé. The respondents knew each other. Both first self-identified as members of the Commando Invisibles and later as fighters with the EFA group.

This individual stressed, during the first round of interviews, that he himself was also an original Commando Invisibles.⁶³⁷ The case of this particular individual was brought up in different discussions with other respondents, often citing the weapons collector as a profiteer. Speaking with the original Commando Invisibles, as well as with an international DDR practitioner, a popular story includes a description of the weapons collector and his entourage bowing their heads in shame and looking at the floor when the remaining members of the original Commando Invisibles turned up.⁶³⁸

Similar to some of the interviews with the self-identified *Jeunes Associés* ex-combatants, the essence of their narratives was to demonstrate that they were original members of the Commando Invisibles, and that their welfare and reintegration had been neglected by state authorities. In all alternative narratives, whether from EFA or *Jeunes Associés*, those who originally claimed to be Commando Invisibles eventually led the discussion into a grey zone where their membership in Demobilised FN sub-groups became apparent, and their stance towards the Commando Invisibles became less clear. These alternative narratives were most prevalent in the early phases of data collection. Following more precise questions about names and dates, individual accounts drifted back to their original positions, describing membership in the original sub-groups of *Jeunes Associés* and EFA. What was common across the alternative narratives, whether they proclaimed membership in the Commando Invisibles or in other FN-affiliated groups, was the request of material compensation for their wartime efforts. The emphasis placed on material acquisition, whether in terms of pay-outs or back-pay, plus additional health and social service provisions suggest that these individuals deemed that claiming these identities were the best way to obtain these goods. In almost all

⁶³⁷ FN ex-combatant gatekeeper, Interview with the author in Abidjan-Yopougon, August 20, 2016, in-person. This individual later shifted his wartime identity multiples times in subsequent interviews, at times proclaiming to be an original Commando Invisibles, at others to be the head of the *Jeunes Associés* in a commune of Abidjan, and later to be an original FN-loyalist from the north, and whose only wartime identity was assistant to a ComZone who had neglected to provide for him in the post-crisis period.

⁶³⁸ Group discussion, original Commando Invisibles, Abidjan-Abobo, October 1, 2016; International DDR practitioner, discussion with the author in Abidjan-II Plateaux, February 16, 2016, in-person.

discussions, individuals highlighted their combat experiences and how volatile their now precarious situations could be for lasting peace and security.

Alternative narratives of the Commando Invisibles story go beyond individual claims to membership. Separate accounts presented by a handful of government officials provide an entirely different composition of the Commando Invisibles. In one version, IB was cast as an opportunist leader who arrived to take the lead of the group only after the FN affiliates in Abidjan had considerable success. In this version, IB was allowed to take the lead because he had a history of being a real military officer with proven strategic and tactical military experience.⁶³⁹ The Commando Invisibles, in this particular account, was made up of defecting security forces from the police, gendarmes, and military, who then trained civilians to battle Gbagbo's regime.

Other narratives reinforced the rise of individuals with questionable wartime experience during the post-conflict phases of ex-combatant integration into the state security forces. In a handful of informal discussions, officials of the regime recounted stories the Commando Invisibles with an entirely different set of actors. In these versions, FN supporters currently serving in public office described having only one supporter on-site in Abobo—the neighbourhood strongman “4x4”, mentioned previously in Chapter 6. Due to his prominence within northern-dominated communities, 4x4 was able to mobilise youth in his area, to launch attacks on Gbagbo's state forces, and consequently could open ground for the FRCI to enter and take control of Abidjan. In this alternative narrative, 4x4, despite not being a ComZone, was able to wield influence in the post-conflict distribution of posts within the armed forces because of the key role he played during the post-electoral crisis. This narrative placed emphasis on the role of 4x4 and his networks in the post-crisis period, all the while reinforcing the omission of IB and his original Commando Invisibles.⁶⁴⁰

⁶³⁹ Ivoirian Former ADDR staff / *Jeunes Associés* representative, interview with the author in Abidjan, September 30, 2016, in-person.

⁶⁴⁰ Commissioner Ministry of Defence, informal discussion with the author in Abidjan-Plateau, October 25, 2016, in-person.

The alternative account of the Commando Invisibles, under the leadership of 4x4, mirrors down to the finest detail, the experience presented by the original Commando Invisibles themselves. When asked about IB and his supporters, proponents of this alternate narrative insisted that IB emerged on the scene only after the Commando Invisibles of 4x4 had gained momentum. In this particular telling, IB and his supporters attempted to take credit for the battle and later claimed the group as their own.⁶⁴¹ Additional comments from state officials referred to IB and his supporters as a group who thrived in times of chaos and instability, and who surfaced at opportunistic moments, such as elections, as a way of being noticed by the regime. Their attempts of being noticed, however, were described as producing little more than annoyance to the state authorities.⁶⁴² When cross-checking this version with the EFA and *Jeunes Associés* ex-combatants mentioned above, the respondents largely rejected the claim by government officials that 4x4 was the original leader. When asked who 4x4 was, these respondents explained that he was an individual who “invented himself” on the spot to capitalise on post-conflict opportunities of promotion within the state security apparatus.⁶⁴³

As evident by the alternative narratives above, individual respondents seem to have adopted the name of the Commando Invisibles as a way of demonstrating their war-time experiences. By proving to their audience that they were original members with real combat experience, these individuals most often highlighted how they had not yet received appropriate material compensation. As previously mentioned, the individuals in these versions, had been left behind—that is, not integrated or financially compensated by Ouattara’s regime—during the post-conflict period, and, therefore, failed to acquire their due financial and social service compensation. Moving beyond the individual accounts of ‘forgotten’ membership in the Commando Invisibles, the

⁶⁴¹ Commissioner Ministry of Defence, informal discussion with the author in Abidjan-Plateau, October 25, 2016, in-person.

⁶⁴² Commissioner Ministry of Defence, informal discussion with the author in Abidjan-Plateau, October 25, 2016, in-person.

⁶⁴³ EFA fighter 2, interview with the author in Abidjan-Attécoubé, December 23, 2016, in-person; EFA fighter 3, interview with the author in Abidjan-Attécoubé, December 23, 2016 in-person; *Jeunes Associés*, interview with the author in Abidjan-Riviera II, November 12, 2016 in-person.

alternate versions presented by the state authorities demonstrated a degree of state complicity in blurring the narrative of the original Commando Invisibles, to the advantage of a new set of post-conflict actors who became active members when compensation was given.

The above examples demonstrate the tensions that can arise when claiming the identity. The original Commando Invisibles view the label as dangerous and continue to refrain from claiming the identity. At the same time, FN supporters who sit at the margins of power and influence have resorted to it, as a final effort to demonstrate their wartime experience in the hopes of obtaining material compensation. While this section revealed how these stories were being presented during the fieldwork, it argues that it is likely that similar stories would be told to other researchers with a less solid grasp on the identities and intricacies of the conflicts.

Personal Loyalties Reinforcing Clientelistic Expectations

An examination of the Commando Invisibles in the post-conflict period yields two important findings. First, the choice of active disengagement challenges the notion that battle-hardened ex-combatants are most likely to disrupt post-conflict peace and security. Second, that the group's silence, coupled with a proliferation of competing narratives, resulted in several individual claims of membership and activity amongst broader groups of FN supporters in order to advance their individual financial interests. These calls for conflict-related compensation were most often in the form of pay-outs, back-pay, or access to medical and other social services. Perhaps the most puzzling aspect of these findings is to try and understand why individuals have deliberately sought to re-cast themselves as original Commando Invisibles, while the original members themselves chose to actively disengage from any form of claims-making or broader political engagement activity. Moreover, questions arise of why individuals would attempt to profess allegiance to IB

while fully knowing that it would not earn them any favour with the post-conflict regime.

Consistent with the sentiments expressed by those from the Gbagbo supporter groups, members of the original Commando Invisibles voiced a sense of victors' justice. Despite sharing political affinities with the common northern cause of the FN rebellion, the internal cleavages between pro-IB and pro-Soro wings eventually led to their persecution in the post-crisis state. The trajectories of political engagement could not be more different for the two groups, the "victors" of Soro being highly active in claims-making, while the original Commando Invisibles actively avoided any public display of dissidence or opposition. The emphasis placed on blending into society rather than proclaiming its unique status and history stands in stark contrast to the other FN supporters, who pushed their wartime sacrifices to the forefront of public debate.

Having backed and stayed loyal to assassinated leader IB, members of this group explained how they feel restricted in their ability to express discontent. Group meetings led by their remaining leaders, employed vocabulary such as "*même-clan*" ("same clan"), when referring to decision-makers who were aligned with Soro and who may have had an impact on their integration opportunities. In their view, the best and only available response was to resist the urge to speak out. That is, to sit silently, and ensure that none of their members were responsible for disturbing the post-conflict peace. While the FN supporters, both integrated and demobilised, took to the streets during the January and May 2007 mutinies, the original Commando Invisibles remained silent over their own grievances of military integration. The basis of claims-making for those mutinies was the fact that the integrated FN soldiers brought Ouattara to power, and, therefore, were to be financially compensated beyond what they had already received. What was missing in their claims-making was any mention of the role played by the original Commando Invisibles. Similarly, ex-combatants from the original Commando Invisibles have refrained from the many demonstrations held by Gbagbo supporters against the new Constitution, the same way that they refrained from

participating in other demonstrations alongside 'forgotten' ex-combatants from the Demobilised FN group. The instructions to disengage, given by the remaining leadership, indicate that there was still a significant degree of cohesion and loyalty within the group, as they actively remove themselves from the public space. While these ex-combatants refrained from engaging in any disruptions, their cohesion and loyalty to their identities may mean a swift remobilisation in the event instability returns to the country.

The second finding, that of alternative narratives and individual claims of Commando Invisibles membership, required a significant degree of triangulation and intimate knowledge of credible sources. The finding, however, is vital to understanding larger trends of post-conflict ex-combatant claims-making. As presented above, individuals often self-proclaimed Commando Invisibles membership at the onset of discussions, only to later blur the narratives and reveal that they belonged to other FN sub-groups when questioned more specifically. The first observation is the conditions required for this phenomenon to happen. The absence of the original Commando Invisibles in the initial post-conflict years meant that many alternative narratives could emerge undisputed. Without the presence of the original commanders and the most loyal rank-and-file, a rigorous defence of the group's history was never upheld. More importantly, is the backdrop of socioeconomic standing of most of the respondents. For those who initially claimed the Commando Invisibles status, only to later shift identities, the living conditions were precarious. Moreover, opportunities to earn a better livelihood were scarce. Taking this into consideration, the economic incentives, and particularly employment opportunities for ex-combatants, become desirable goods. As demonstrated above, claims making by these individuals were very public, such as the case of Commander Féré's YouTube videos, and, over time, grew increasingly remote and secretive, as was the case with the FN supporters who self-proclaimed Commando Invisibles status discreetly in private interviews for this thesis. Together, these observations align with other trends demonstrated in this research that individuals that are further away from people of influence in the victors' camp are less likely to have their claims fulfilled, and in response,

have taken on varying identities in order to try to advance their claims. Consistent across these claims, mostly from self-identifying FN supporters, were allusions to their heightened capacity for violence and instability- a reality that they warned should not be forgotten. Although this research cannot verify that these alternative narratives were deliberate attempts to advance one's economic standing, it does confidently suggest that the two are linked.

In keeping with the broader findings of ex-combatants involved in the FN rebellion, this chapter adds nuance to the finding that political loyalty and proximity to influential actors strongly influence ex-combatant political behaviours. In the case of the original Commando Invisibles, political affinity was shared, as was conflict-related experience in the early years of the rebellion. The difference, and the point where nuance becomes crucial, is that loyalties to specific individuals was a critical factor in determining if a post-conflict context was conducive for successful claims-making or not. In the case of the original Commando Invisibles, the break from the pro-Soro camp of the FN rebellion was enough to keep IB and his followers out of the distribution of post-conflict posts and benefits. The importance that ex-combatants give to personal loyalties further reinforces the argument that that ex-combatants have, to a certain extent, counted on the continued practices of clientelistic governance to reign in the post-conflict period in ways that disrupt prevailing expectations about spoilers coming from excluded groups. The successful claims-making by those with loyalty to Soro and the affiliated former ComZones reinforces expectations of political continuity in the post-conflict period. This, in turn, as argued in the previous chapters, shapes the choice of ex-combatant political engagement in the post-conflict period, regardless of the authenticity of their combat experience.

The decreasing willingness of Demobilised FN to declare original Commando Invisibles identities in public ways is worthy of further analysis. This finding suggests that even amongst those who attempt to cast themselves as the original members, there was a general understanding that membership in the group could still be publicly denounced. The alternative versions of Commando Invisibles' history recounted in private discussions by the FN

aligned government officials reinforces this observation, as they prioritised narratives that omitted entirely the role of IB and his closest allies. Of additional importance, as described in the previous chapter, is that amongst the FN supporters most active in claims-making, not once was the identity of Commando Invisibles proclaimed. The avoidance of eliciting Commando Invisibles stories in the public space indicates that it is not a lucrative story to be told within the country. The alternative histories of Commando Invisibles membership, may, therefore, be reserved as a last-ditch individual effort to brand oneself as a forgotten combatant without material compensation, especially when trying to gain the sympathies of the international community. It is likely that these individuals use the Commando Invisibles identity in the hopes of having greater success with people outside their Ivoirian communities- 'outsiders' who would have less knowledge about the actors and the events. These observations have been facilitated by a lack of verified history around the key events and actors, allowing new individuals to make claim to compensation reserved for a specific set of actors. As one respondent, who first self-identified as a Commando Invisibles and later re-positioned himself as an EFA fighter said:

They [FN supporters] want to re-invent themselves. They take things that they heard in their circles, they want to profit a bit. It works a lot with those who lack detailed knowledge of the crisis. The ones who tell the stories with pride, with passion, are probably not the real ones.⁶⁴⁴

The quotation above sheds light on the most likely scenario for the case of FN supporters who sit at the margins of power claiming Commando Invisibles status: that people who are desperate and further from entitlements seem to take on whatever identities they can in order to see if they can get some traction. This thesis suggests that as they were not true members of the Commando Invisibles who engaged in violent combat and killings, they had little fear about possible repercussions. This explains, partially, the reasons why the original Commando Invisibles seeks anonymity and a low profile, while those with little

⁶⁴⁴ EFA Fighter 3, interview with the author in Abidjan, December 23, 2016, in-person.

experience confidently profess membership to both the broader public in the early years, and now to international ‘outsiders’.

Conclusion: “Something that you cannot see... can you fight it?”⁶⁴⁵

In closing, the enduring allure of the ‘invisible’ forces of the Commando Invisibles is worth special mention. Reaching out beyond the target interviews with self-proclaimed ex-combatants, this research further captured the ways that Commando Invisibles are spoken about in wider community circles. The enduring mystique that surrounds the group’s identity has been told many times in many different circles with much animation. Regardless of whether their history is deemed beneficial for official claims-making to the post-conflict regime, the mysterious nature of the armed group has become apocryphal, despite their relatively recent presence in 2010-2011.

For many, the Commando Invisibles elicit images of an “invisible” force. When questioned about the Commando Invisibles, respondents across all three groups, in addition to non-combatant Ivoirians, generally held the Commando Invisibles as almost mystical, in awe of its secrecy, of its tactics, and of its efficacy.

The Commando Invisibles, it is not an individual. There were maybe 15-16 people based on what I heard. It was a sort of game where they could disappear all of a sudden and reappear in another location. Not everybody had this *faculté-là* [capacity]. And then, those that saw this said “ok, this is the commando invisibles that disappears”. In fact, they had an advantage when dealing with police and gendarmes that came to Abobo *en cargo* [explains ambush as a tactic]. That’s how they killed them. And then they [state forces] said to each other “we didn’t even see them!”⁶⁴⁶

Adding to the allure is a common story that describes how police officers allegedly said that they would stop and see shots going off all around them, yet

⁶⁴⁵ Ivoirian Former ADDR staff / *Jeunes Associés* representative, interview with the author in Abidjan, September 30, 2016, in-person.

⁶⁴⁶ Ivoirian Former ADDR staff / *Jeunes Associés* representative, interview with the author in Abidjan, September 30, 2016, in-person.

not seeing a single person firing them. The assailants, the story goes, were “invisible” to them.⁶⁴⁷ For others, descriptions of the Commando Invisibles involve individuals disguised as crazy and homeless people, locally referred to as “*des fous*”. During the day, they would be in costume, blending into society as the homeless, re-surfacing in their military identities at night to launch their offensives. In this telling, the Commando Invisibles, as a movement, started after the wave of coup attempts, resulting in a government crack-down on precarious neighbourhoods housing many *fous*.⁶⁴⁸ For others yet, in a version held to be true by hard-line Gbagbo supporters, the Commando Invisibles was an armed group created by the UN peacekeeping mission and the French forces to bring the FN rebels into Abidjan.⁶⁴⁹ Regardless of their origins, many of these respondents cared little about obtaining the truth on the group, choosing rather to shape the group into their desired reading of the 11-year crisis. The only time when the empirical truth about the group seemed to matter was when issues of war-related compensation were brought up.

The silence and absence of the original Commando Invisibles allowed for alternative narratives to arise, some of which could have serious implications for the original members of the group itself. As one international analyst put it, the pressure by the Ivoirian public⁶⁵⁰ and the international observers⁶⁵¹ put on the Ivoirian government to equally persecute members of their own camp may work against the Commando Invisibles. It is well known that the FN fighters committed human rights abuses as they descended into the south to take control of Abidjan. In light of the proliferation of alternative versions of Commando Invisibles history, however, one observer suggested that the Ouattara government may seek to thrust the Commando Invisibles, rather than the former ComZones towards the ICC.⁶⁵² These recent attempts to achieve

⁶⁴⁷ FN ex-combatant gatekeeper, discussion with the author in Abidjan-Yopougon, November 10, 2016, in-person.

⁶⁴⁸ Gbagbo-supporter, Interview with the author in Edinburgh, October 31, 2015, in-person.

⁶⁴⁹ Gbagbo-supporter, interview with the author in Abidjan, November 30, 2016, in-person.

⁶⁵⁰ Multiple informal discussions with the broader public, including taxi-drivers, professors, Ivoirian colleagues of southwestern descent, Abidjan-multiple, August 2016-July 2017.

⁶⁵¹ “Côte d’Ivoire: UN peacekeeping mission ends. Impunity, security sector reforms threaten stability,” Human Rights Watch, 30 June 30, 2017, <http://www.hrw.org/print/305979>.

⁶⁵² International Information Analyst, discussion with the author in Abidjan, October 13, 2016, in-person.

balanced justice might shed light on the reasons why the original members remain quiet while other groups appropriate their stories: because the original members actually did engage in violent urban warfare. At the same time, those appropriating the stories know that there is nothing linking them to the crimes committed by the FN and the Commando Invisibles. Although this thesis is unable to empirically reinforce this statement, it advances the likelihood that those who are willing to use the name do not fear reprisals in the same way as the original Commando Invisibles do.

The lack of fear of reprisals for the violent acts committed by the Commando Invisibles and the larger FN group, this chapter argues, opens an opportunity for individuals to borrow armed group identities to engage in claims-making. The people using the identities for material gain seem less concerned about the implications of their actions. With such high levels of ambiguity in the history and identities of the original Commando Invisibles, these individuals have a facilitated path to claiming identities of true battle-hardened Ivoirian fighters. The high levels of ambiguity also mean that there might be some chance that they can convince someone to compensate them somehow, or at the very least, to lobby on their behalf. In this case, as previously mentioned by the EFA ex-combatant above, outsiders who might have heard about the Commando Invisibles but are unable to discern who is actually who are vulnerable. This point is important to raise as it is proof of identity borrowing amongst individuals wanting ex-combatant status. Combined with the claims-making efforts of demobilised FN, as presented in Chapter 7, it reveals a trend in behaviour amongst extended circles of 'victors' that are key to understanding Côte d'Ivoire's post-conflict context.

Regardless of what the future holds for the original members of the Commando Invisibles, what is certain is that the original members have chosen to actively disengage from the political sphere. Disengagement, as far as the original Commando Invisibles are concerned, is a preferable strategy that prioritises the sustainability and security of the group, rather than the acquisition of material or financial conflict-related compensation. Perhaps the best way to describe the phenomenon of the Commando Invisibles in the post-conflict

period is best said by the Commando Invisibles themselves, in an interview with *Jeune Afrique*.

Those who appear in the media today have reached individual agreements and cannot express themselves in our name at all. The characteristic of the Commando Invisibles, the original, is that he does not speak.⁶⁵³

⁶⁵³ Niakate, "Côte d'Ivoire."

Chapter 9: Conclusion

This thesis examined the topic of political engagement across groups of ex-combatants in post-conflict Côte d'Ivoire. It asked why some ex-combatants mobilised to make financial and material gain and other did not. It demonstrated that in post-conflict periods, ex-combatants are ultimately political actors, making use of the label 'ex-combatant' when their political patrons come into power and shelving it when their patrons lose. Substantial analysis has gone into the reintegration successes and failures of ex-combatants after war, as well as when their movements turn into political parties. This thesis builds from these issues by exploring how ex-combatants engage more broadly with politics in the post-conflict period. This thesis argued for a shift in the way ex-combatants are viewed, moving away from the treatment of ex-combatants as a homogenous group 'to be dealt with' to one where the label 'ex-combatant' becomes a political tool for individuals to leverage. This is in line with Jaremeý McMullin⁶⁵⁴ and Johanna Söderström's⁶⁵⁵ calls for a more nuanced view of ex-combatant interactions in the post-conflict period, and draws inspiration from the work of Norma Kriger,⁶⁵⁶ who, through her examination of post-independence Zimbabwe, documented and analysed the importance of history and politics on ex-combatant behaviour. Despite the political rupture and supposed opportunities for social transformation arising from violent conflict, ex-combatant participants in this research still behave as though they expect continuities from the past, even when there is a significant change in government. This thesis reaffirms that historical patterns of governance matter when seeking to understand ex-combatant behaviours and the larger likelihoods of enduring peace and stability.

⁶⁵⁴ Jaremeý McMullin, *Ex-combatants and the Post-Conflict State: Challenges of Reintegration*, Basingstoke and New York, Palgrave Macmillan (2013).

⁶⁵⁵ Johanna Söderström, "The political consequences of reintegration programmes in current peace-building: a framework for analysis" *Conflict, Security & Development* 13(1), (2013): 87-116.

⁶⁵⁶ Norma J. Kriger, *Guerrilla Veterans in Post-war Zimbabwe: Symbolic and Violent Politics 1980–1987*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

Prevailing research suggests ex-combatant is a category unto itself. In cases of decisive – or apparent – political victory after conflict, however, the label of ‘ex-combatant’ becomes a fragmented category with significant political weight. Why do some fighters become vocal advocates of their ‘ex-combatant’ entitlements, while others slip into political silence? And, more puzzlingly, why did the victors and their fighters in Côte d’Ivoire become those most likely to create ongoing instability? This thesis argued that clientelism set the stage for highly personalistic identification between fighters and their former armed group leaders, many of which went on to occupy powerful political posts in the post-conflict period. The distinct political history of Côte d’Ivoire, from the time of Independence in 1960 to the start of political instability in December 1999 has unquestionably shaped Ivoirian understandings and expectations of politics. Chapter 4 traced the history of governance under Félix Houphouët-Boigny from 1960 to his death in 1993. Houphouët-Boigny’s rule was characterised as a strong charismatic leadership style, with a top-down control of virtually every aspect of political life. Elite appointments to public office, as well as the distribution of goods such as land and integration opportunities into the armed forces were carried out along ethnic lines and in a way that ensured unwavering loyalty to, and dependence on, Houphouët-Boigny. Chapter 4 further traced how appointments to public office and the reception of state resources were often tools of co-optation for political dissidents who posed a threat, real or imagined, to the one-party state of the PDCI and the personal rule of Houphouët-Boigny.⁶⁵⁷ Precedence was set, and, therefore, engrained in Ivoirian minds that political loyalty to those in power would likely increase opportunities for socioeconomic and political advancement. The data presented in Chapter 4 uncovered how, following Houphouët-Boigny’s death in 1993, successive governments continued to award positions in the armed forces to their loyalists. An area of future research could involve a more systematic tracing of how military recruitment was conducted across time under different governments.

⁶⁵⁷ Samba Diarra, *Les Faux Complots d’ Houphouët-Boigny*, (Paris: Karthala, 1998).

The explanations given by ex-combatants and presented throughout this thesis revealed their expectations that similar practices be continued in the post-conflict period. This expectation, predictably, reinforced local expectations of who could successfully make claims for economic advancement and who could not, based on political loyalties during, and after, the conflict. In this sense, participation in the 11-year political conflict arguably opened opportunities for political supporters to position themselves as ‘insiders’, seeking their share of benefits. Loyalties to the politically defeated leaders, both Laurent Gbagbo and Ibrahim Coulibaly (“IB”), were also prevalent amongst ex-combatants, as they considered that the conflict was not yet over and were rather maintaining their loyalties for when their side reigns victorious.

This thesis broadly argued that the legacies of post-independence governance shaped post-conflict political behaviours. This finding builds on works from Bratton and De Walle and brings them into the post-conflict literature by demonstrating that the political spheres created beforehand may have residual impact on contemporary political behaviours, both constraining and enabling.⁶⁵⁸ Despite social change and political ruptures, the political history mattered in shaping the contemporary expectations of Ivoirians. This finding resonates with ideas of historical institutionalism involving the “formal rules, compliance procedures, and standard operating practices that structure the relationship between individuals in the various units of the polity and economy.”⁶⁵⁹ To make its case, this thesis showed that political affinities and proximity to influential political actors significantly influenced the political behaviours of ex-combatants. Ex-combatants across armed group factions identified when opportunities to advance their personal, financial, and political interests were there or not. Those who felt they had won the war considered that they had the most solid grounds for claims-making and ties through which to make their claims. Those with feelings of defeat, considered themselves to be excluded from opportunities. Given the prevalence of clientelistic exchanges

⁶⁵⁸ Bratton and Van De Walle, *Democratic Experiments in Africa*, 242.

⁶⁵⁹ Peter A. Hall, *Governing the Economy : The Politics of State Intervention in Britain and France*. Europe and the International Order Series. Cambridge: Polity, 1986, 19.

in the history of Ivoirian governance, clientelistic ties inevitably become seen as a necessary pre-requisite for claims-making in the post-conflict period.

This division was further compounded by their proximity to influential political figures. Those in proximity tended to engage in the most disruptive forms of claims-making with much success, while those on the margins used less disruptive tactics and achieved little to no success or bided their time and disengaged more or less completely. Given the historical patterns of governance in Côte d'Ivoire- governance that frequently co-opted individuals for their political loyalty- ex-combatant political behaviours demonstrate an expected continuity of this type of governance. The importance of political affinity was most obvious in Chapters 5 (Gbagbo-supporters) and 8 (Commando Invisibles). These two chapters demonstrated that ex-combatants with political loyalties to the defeated, Laurent Gbagbo and Ibrahim Coulibaly, did not engage in political demonstrations that disturbed the peace. Ex-combatants from these groups equally did not seek opportunities to make claims for greater financial or employment benefits. The reluctance of these groups to leverage their status as ex-combatants to advance their financial and livelihood interests vis-à-vis the post-conflict regime of Ouattara was due, in their words, to their status as the defeated and that it was not their time to make gains. In light of these findings, Chapters 5 and 8 demonstrated that political affiliation mattered in determining who was likely to make claims and demonstrated little evidence of battle experience alone as an enabling feature of disturbing political behaviour.

Contrary to ex-combatants who remained loyal to Gbagbo and to Ibrahim Coulibaly, those who positioned themselves as political victors following the 2010-11 post-electoral crisis, the FN supporters, were highly engaged in claims-making activities. These individuals unabashedly leveraged their status as FN-affiliated ex-combatants to make claims to Ouattara's post-conflict regime for greater financial compensation and additional positions in the Ivoirian armed forces and the civil service. Closer examinations in Chapters 6 (Integrated FN) and 7 (Demobilised FN), demonstrated that proximity also influenced the success and disruptive potential of claims-makers. Amongst the

victors with the closest proximity to powerful political elites, those who supported Ouattara and were integrated into the armed forces, political engagement took the form of armed mutiny as a way of claims-making. Over the course of two mutinies carried out in January and April 2017, the integrated FN-affiliates effectively paralysed economic activity in all major cities and threatened the stability of the country. In both instances, their efforts were successful, drawing a swift response from FN-affiliated Ministers, former ComZone warlords of the FN insurgency, and the President himself. The FN-affiliated mutineers left the negotiating table with a number of their demands met. Chapter 6 (Integrated FN) showed that ex-combatants who were integrated into the armed forces and where, therefore, in closer proximity to individuals of influence, were more likely to vocalise their claims in highly disruptive and public ways. Such tactics were frequently repeated in the past, each of which was met with greater concessions from each government.

The success of the Integrated FN in making claims, however, did not carry through to Demobilised FN ex-combatants. For ex-combatants who were affiliated with the victorious insurgency but who were demobilised through the national DDR programme or by themselves, staked claims to the regime by writing letters, forming associations, and participating in public protests. Chapter 7 demonstrated how groups of Demobilised FN ex-combatants appropriated the discourses of the mutiny and attempted to emulate the successes of the integrated soldiers. When they took to the streets, the most vocal among them were arrested and detained for several days until momentum for their movements dwindled. The most successful demonstration carried-out was one that occurred alongside their peers from the Integrated FN group, during the time of the mutinies. Their claims-making activities, however, yielded only marginal success in the form of blanket promises by the government for more community projects. This success paled in comparison to their integrated FN peers who received well over 12 million F CFA (approximately £16,000) each during the same time period. This thesis posits that these ex-combatants were demobilised, willingly or forcefully into civilian life, and, therefore, did not have the same degrees of proximity to individuals of political influence.

Consequently, their claims were not regarded with the same sense of urgency. While it could be argued that the Integrated FN's access to weapons created the sense of urgency, such an observation neglects that other uniformed personnel, most notably from the former FDS structures under Gbagbo, did not participate in the mutiny. Taking up arms was, therefore, contingent on political loyalties. Moreover, the need for former ComZones to mitigate the mutiny alongside the Minister of Defence and military hierarchy reinforces the extent to which personal loyalties are important in the post-conflict state. As the Demobilised FN shared the same political loyalties but sat on the margins of political and military might, their claims were *slightly* less disruptive but *significantly* less successful. Other attempts at claims-making from this group frequently employed a discourse of political loyalty during the conflict and a reminder of the sacrifices made on behalf of the post-conflict regime. Although both groups of FN supporters vocalised many of the same grievances, only those who were integrated were accorded additional concessions because of their actions. The outcome suggests that there was a degree of in-fighting over state resources amongst those who supported the Ouattara regime. Together, Chapters 4 and 5 showed that proximity mattered and that those who were closer to political power, even if only because of integration into the state apparatus, were more likely to engage in disruptive behaviours and to make financial and livelihood gains.

Conceptually, this thesis drew from Allen Hicken's work on clientelism, in which clientelistic exchanges consist of four key elements: dyadic relationships, contingency and reciprocity, hierarchy, and iteration.⁶⁶⁰ Applied to the case of Côte d'Ivoire, clientelistic expectations were voiced repeatedly by the participants in this research, each accounting for their actions through this framework. In Chapter 5, Gbagbo supporters maintained a strong loyalty to the central figure of Laurent Gbagbo, despite his on-going trial in the ICC. In addition to the symbolism that Gbagbo represented, socialist leanings and a break from foreign dependence, ex-combatants loyal to Gbagbo were

⁶⁶⁰ Allen Hicken, "Clientelism," *The Annual Review of Political Science* 14 (2011): 289-310.

committed to a long-term battle, with expectations of returns.⁶⁶¹ Loyalty to Gbagbo and his party was seen as a long-term investment that will bring benefits once the FPI regains power. Chapters 6 and 7 (FN-supporters) equally demonstrated the prevalence of clientelistic thinking amongst ex-combatants. Repeatedly (both in this research and in media), ex-combatants voiced their grievances and expectations of financial returns for their political loyalty and support to the FN rebellion. The ex-combatants in these chapters argued that the promises made to them during the rebellion had not been upheld, but that their political loyalty to the leaders of the FN rebellion and to President Alassane Ouattara would continue to be honoured. This finding is similar to Kriger's observations of veterans in Zimbabwe pledging allegiance to the state at the same time as they exerted pressure on the regime to provide additional compensation.⁶⁶² Despite being characterised as a liberation struggle, the case of Zimbabwe drew remarkable similarities with ex-combatant political behaviours in post-conflict Côte d'Ivoire. Chapter 8, in turn, presented similar findings, this time from two different angles. Ex-combatants from the Commando Invisibles group refrained entirely from all forms of political engagement on account of their unfavourable position with the post-conflict regime. They explained in Chapter 8 that as their 'clan' was not in power, they did not feel secure enough to create any public disturbances, let alone engage in claims-making, despite the importance of their urban insurgency in bringing Ouattara to power. Chapter 8 also documented how individuals from similar ethnic backgrounds as the FN supporters, yet who had not benefitted from any post-conflict incentives, often attempted to present themselves as Commando Invisibles as a final effort to prove ex-combatant status. Initial declarations of Commando Invisibles identity were prevalent in the immediate post-conflict phases through social media channels such as YouTube. Over time, however, as it became clear that the Commando Invisibles were less likely to benefit from post-conflict opportunities, these individuals gradually withdrew from public forums and reserved their claims for private discussions with those who they

⁶⁶¹ Hicken, "Clientelism," 291. The contingency/reciprocity element of clientelism additionally includes promises of benefits in the future, and does not have to be immediately received.

⁶⁶² Kriger, *Guerilla Veterans in Post-War Zimbabwe*, 1, 10.

considered to be outsiders with little knowledge of the conflict and its original actors. It is likely that this was done as a near final and desperate measure to encourage international outsiders to lobby on their behalf.

The findings of this thesis prompt questions of whether clientelistic ties are a structural constraint or a catalyst of disruptive political mobilisation. The evidence collected for this research indirectly suggests that for those at the margins, it is a constraint, while for those in close proximity to political power it is a catalyst. Those who described themselves as having no ties to political patrons kept low profiles and, if they did mobilise, did so within legally accepted and negotiated terms with the regime. This finding suggests that the perceived prevalence of clientelistic ties are an inhibitor to disruptive political behaviour by those that feel disenfranchised. On the other hand, the lower success rate of victors on the fringes of political power, compared to the victors with closer proximity to individuals of influence, suggests that strong clientelistic ties are a catalyst for disruptive political mobilisation. As both a constraint and a catalyst for disruptive political mobilisation, these observations have significant implications on post-conflict peace and security and should be taken into account when forecasting where post-conflict instability may lay. Academically, the significance of clientelistic ties to ex-combatant choices of political engagement further makes the case for the analytical integration of political dynamics into ex-combatant and post-conflict studies. One of the questions worth pursuing in the future is what the shelf life is of “ex-combatant” status in post-conflict states. Is the mobilisation that stems from it recurring, or does it die out in time?

This analysis, across armed group identities which correlate with political identities, showed that political affinities determine who feels entitled to make financial and employment claims, and proximity impacts who has success and who does not. Because the claims were made through a discourse of wartime service and political loyalty, this thesis classified them as political claims-making. Their political nature is clear when considering the counterfactual; if the claims were devoid of any political inclination, they would likely be made by all ex-combatants regardless of political affinity. The findings of this thesis prove

that this is not the case. Cases such as Côte d'Ivoire, where much of the armed group affiliation mirrored clean and distinct political lines, further demonstrates the necessity of research on ex-combatants to incorporate separate analysis along lines of political affinity.

Counterintuitively, this thesis also showed that the biggest threats to security and stability in Côte d'Ivoire came from those ex-combatants that had benefitted the most in the post-conflict period. The spoilers were not those that were disgruntled and side-lined but were those that took the lion's share of benefits available in the post-conflict period. Integrated FN ex-combatants had not only been integrated into stable employment but had also benefitted from repeated pay-outs for successive mutinies and armed protests. Since 2011, they made use of the most disruptive tactics economically, politically, and socially as there was often small-scale violence and occasional fatalities. The standing assumption of ex-combatant behaviour is that the greatest disturbances to peace and stability would come from ex-combatants who feel the most dissatisfied, the most marginalised, and the most idle.⁶⁶³ In Côte d'Ivoire, however, the opposite was true. The victors were the most disruptive, effectively blending a discourse of political loyalty, unfulfilled promises, and dangerous individuals made that was directed at those who came to power with their support. The defeated, who generally felt neglected, were remarkably compliant and law-abiding, seldom voicing their grievances in public ways. While this result is less surprising to historians of African politics, it is a break in the way ex-combatant research has been approached.

On-Going Issues in Côte d'Ivoire

⁶⁶³ Lephophotho Mashike, "'You are a time bomb...' Ex-combatants in post-conflict South Africa," *Society in Transition* 35, no. 1 (2004): 87-104.

Despite a return to peace and an impressive return to increased foreign investment in the country,⁶⁶⁴ Côte d'Ivoire is still faced with a series of unresolved issues. Issues surrounding the system of land tenure as well as lopsided justice continue trigger localised interethnic disputes. Additionally, the political alliances and reconfigurations of Côte d'Ivoire's major political parties are drumming up fears of instability leading into the 2020 presidential elections. Finally, there is also the remobilisation potential of the combatants, mostly FN-affiliated who did not receive any benefit. The continuation of these issues is important to mention because they may result in continued tensions, that if heightened, could result in a lapse in the current state of peace.

In regards to land tenure, tensions between migrant populations and Ivoirians indigenous to the southwest continue in Côte d'Ivoire's southwestern cocoa regions, perpetuating a situation of slightly less intensified "neither war nor peace".⁶⁶⁵ Many of the tensions involve land disputes dating as far back as the 1960s, resulting in violent attacks later during the 1990s and early 2000s. Two months after the fall of Gbagbo in April 2011, UNHCR reported that there were 320,000 IDPs in Côte d'Ivoire, and 200,000 in refugee camps in neighbouring countries.⁶⁶⁶ Most of the displaced were indigenous populations from the southwest cocoa regions afraid of violent attacks from migrant workers, FRCI, Dozo traditional hunters (who have similar ethnic origins as the FN and who sometimes shared security responsibilities under the FN rebel-held northern territories)- all of which were perceived to have come to 'power' through the victory of Ouattara.⁶⁶⁷ Under the violent attacks lies the essence of the land issue: the majority of migrant populations repeatedly state that the land

⁶⁶⁴ Kim Yi Dionne and Abou Bamba, "Is Ivory Coast seeing a second economic 'miracle'?", *Washington Post*, July 14, 2017, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2017/07/14/is-ivory-coast-seeing-a-second-economic-miracle/>.

⁶⁶⁵ Matthew I. Mitchell, "Land Tenure Reform and Politics in Post-Conflict Côte d'Ivoire: A Precarious Peace in the Western Cocoa Regions", *Canadian Journal of African Studies / Revue Canadienne des Etudes Africaines* 48, no. 2, (2014): 204. The term "neither war nor peace" was first used by Mike McGovern to describe the political crisis between the years of 2002-2007, leading into the Ouagadougou Peace Agreement of 2007. See Mike McGovern, *Making war in Côte d'Ivoire* (London: The University of Chicago Press, 2011), xvii.

⁶⁶⁶ UNHCR, "At Least 300,000 Civilians Still Displaced in Côte d'Ivoire", United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, January 28, 2011, <http://www.unhcr.org/4d42cff46.html>.

⁶⁶⁷ Mitchell, "Land Tenure Reform and Politics in Post-Conflict Côte d'Ivoire," 210.

was sold or transferred to them, making them the rightful owners. The majority of indigenous, however, draw from the 1998 Rural Land Law No. 98-750⁶⁶⁸ to argue that they maintain customary rights to the land. Ouattara, in turn, cannot easily develop a new law of land tenure that risks undermining and damaging the economic interests of his primary support base. Without a thorough solution to the land issue, it is highly likely that the very grievances that sparked the 11-year Ivorian conflict remain in-tact, facilitating the re-emergence of inter-communal violence in the southwest and the possible remobilisation of those with strong perceptions of injustice. Matthew Mitchell best summarised the current dilemma of the post-conflict government, whose primary support base has important ties to these lands as migrant workers.

While the new regime has publicly acknowledged the need to address the land question, the Ivorian government and many in the international community have been slow to fully recognise the urgent need for land reform.⁶⁶⁹

Additionally, post-conflict justice remains, at the time of writing, lopsided. On the eve of Côte d'Ivoire's national Independence Day, celebrated the 7th of August 2018, Alassane Ouattara announced that he would grant amnesty and release approximately 800 prisoners tied to the post-electoral violence of 2011.⁶⁷⁰ Amongst those to be released was Simone Gbagbo, Laurent Gbagbo's controversial and politically active wife. Simone Gbagbo was released on the 8th of August, surrounded by journalists and awaited by her closest supporters. Aside from the media coverage, the event cause little public disturbance, with members of the Ministry of Defence and the FPI political party attesting that no public demonstrations took place.⁶⁷¹ Over a handful of informal discussions with

⁶⁶⁸ The Land Law of 1998 was developed during Bédié's regime against a backdrop of increasingly aggressive assertions of the 'Ivoirité,' which linked the ownership of the land to the identity of the land user, thus marginalizing migrant populations. For more see Alfred Babo, "The Crisis of Public Policies in Côte d'Ivoire: Land Law and the Nationality Trap in Tabou's Rural Communities", *Africa* 83, no.1, (2013): 100-119.

⁶⁶⁹ Mitchell, "Land Tenure Reform and Politics in Post-Conflict Côte d'Ivoire," 205.

⁶⁷⁰ "Ouattara met en liberté Simone Gbagbo, Assoa Adou, Lida Kouassi, Souleymane Kamagaté 'Soul to Soul' et environ 800 autres personnes," Abidjan.net, August 6, 2018, <https://news/abidjan.et/h/642681.html>.

⁶⁷¹ Representative Etat Major General and representative from FPI (Affi camp), informal discussions, August 8, 2018 in Abidjan, in-person.

Ivoirian Gendarme officers and FPI representatives, this move was taken within the Gbagbo-supporting camp to signify a weakening of Ouattara and the RHDP coalition that defeated Gbagbo in 2010 and won re-election in 2015. The 2017 mutinies revealed to Ivoirians that the former ComZones integrated into high-ranking military posts continued to wield significant power. The discovery of the weapons cache in a close collaborator of Guillaume Soro's house further signalled that Ouattara may not have total control over those who helped him come to power. It is against this backdrop that those FPI supporters consulted through the informal discussions believed signified a weakening of Ouattara's political position. The amnesty and liberation provided to approximately 800 prisoners, 500 of which are believed to be either in provisional liberty or in exile,⁶⁷² was, at the time of writing, met unenthusiastically. Of course, it is possible that Ouattara's recent political moves signal that he is strong and is unthreatened by the political opposition. This thesis advises caution with such an observation. Without the full understanding of various streams of international political pressure that Ouattara must manage, it is difficult to tell who truly lead the initiative to level to political playing field and reverse some of the one-sided persecutions. A peaceful 2020 presidential elections is in the interest of more than Ivoirians, with an increasingly invested European and American presence in the Sahel region to which Côte d'Ivoire shares borders. With booming anti- and counter-terrorism operations north of the Ivoirian border, it is important to consider whether the risk of opening another conflict in Côte d'Ivoire is in the best interests of the regional actors. In the same discussion, the representative from the FPI took the opportunity to also state than the ICC had arrived about a month prior (June/July 2018) to begin preliminary investigations into the Duékoué massacres- one of the most bloody and significant face-offs between the FN forces (then called the FRCI), and Gbagbo supporters. This investigation is expected to lead to the summoning of three former ComZones to the ICC, although the information has not yet been

⁶⁷² "Ouattara met en liberté Simone Gbagbo, Assoa Adou, Lida Kouassi, Souleymane Kamagaté 'Soul to Soul' et environ 800 autres personnes," Abidjan.net, August 6, 2018, <https://news/abidjan.et/h/642681.html>.

made public.⁶⁷³ The political implications of this would be positive. It would signal to Gbagbo supporters that justice is truly being carried out evenly. At the same time, although Simone Gbagbo was liberated in Côte d'Ivoire, she is still being summoned the ICC. In a recent interview with *Jeune Afrique*, Crown Prosecutor Fatou Bensouda explained that the call for Simone Gbagbo holds as the ICC does not believe that she was tried according to the same standards as the international court.⁶⁷⁴ Time will tell if the Gbagbo supporters soften to Ouattara's most recent actions and begin to believe that justice is being pursued in a fair manner. Whether it reduces the perceptions of victor's justice and the importance of clientelistic relationships with the regime is questionable. That the Integrated FN have been paid-out multiples times and have amassed sizeable personal wealth, combined with the time that has elapsed, Gbagbo supporters are likely to still argue that the FN's political patrons gave the best spoils to their own. Equitable justice, after years of perceived inequality, is likely to do little to reverse the current understanding of 'politics as usual'.

Of equally important note is that political divisions remain strong, even if alliances continue to shift. From the beginning of 2018 onwards, the RHDP coalition that brought Ouattara to power against the 46% obtained by Gbagbo in the 2011 elections, is unstable, with contestation for the future leadership of the party between the RDR and the PDCI.⁶⁷⁵ On the 17th of June 2018, the PDCI, under the presidency of Henry Konan Bédié, declined to continue the alliance with the RDR to form the RHDP in the 2020 presidential elections. Since then, tensions within the PDCI erupted, with loyalists to Bédié maintaining their solidarity, and a small group of PDCI members currently holding public office in Ouattara's government forming an alliance with the RDR to continue the RHDP on the 16th of July 2018. Six days later, the PDCI of Bédié announced

⁶⁷³ FPI Youth Leader, Discussion in Abidjan-II Plateaux, August 11, 2018, in-person. Similar information was also pulled from a *Jeune Afrique* interview with ICC Crown Prosecutor Fatou Bensouda. In the interview Bensouda confirmed that investigations into "all camps" were being pursued and intensified, and that it was not yet time to publicly disclose the findings. For more see Anna Sylvestre-Treiner, "Fatou Bensouda Procureur Générale de la Cour Pénale Internationale: 'Personne n'échappera à la justice'," *Jeune Afrique*, no. 3003 (29 July – 4 August 2018): 25.

⁶⁷⁴ Sylvestre-Treiner, "Fatou Bensouda Procureur Générale de la Cour Pénale Internationale": 25.

⁶⁷⁵ Vincent Duhem and Baudelaire Mieu, "A Quoi Songe Ouattara ? », *Jeune Afrique*, no. 3304 (5 – 11 August 2018) : 21.

that the dissident members were excluded, as they could not legally belong to two parties at once.⁶⁷⁶ Equally shaking the political terrain was a recent statement by former FN leader, Guillaume Soro, that he would consider placing his candidacy for the 2020 presidential elections.⁶⁷⁷ Over the past year Soro has had public tensions with Ouattara, the most recent being his absence at Constitutive Assembly of the RHDP.⁶⁷⁸ At this time, it is unclear if he would run as an independent, with an established party, or in alliance with the RHDP or even the FPI, as one observer suggested.⁶⁷⁹ Recalling that in 2010 Gbagbo and the FPI party alone received 46% of the national vote, while contentious elections, it will be of vital importance for Ouattara's RDR to maintain the RHDP alliance. This further demonstrates that there is persistent clientelism with the same political patrons mobilising their supporters. Over the next year it will be interesting to see if Bédié maintains his separation, and if so, who the support base of the PDCI will back. Similarly, if Soro decides to run, significant shifts of vocalised loyalty may occur amongst the former ComZones, who clearly demonstrated during the mutinies of 2017, that they retain significant power over the integrated FN FACI soldiers. At the same time, given that the FPI is currently fragmented under two different leaders suggests that there is currently no strong opposition on the part of the FPI. In such a climate, where it seems that Soro wields the most military might, political alliances and their bases of loyalty again become of vital importance to maintaining the post-conflict peace and the economic growth that it ushered in.

Finally, there is also the fate of those ex-combatants with legitimate claims of participation who did not benefit from any post-conflict dividend, or those that would leave the FACI structures. On the 18th of December 2017, a young integrated FN soldier disclosed news, in a private messenger conversation, of his upcoming retirement from the FACI. His retirement was, he

⁶⁷⁶ Andre Silver Konan, "Jusqu'où iront les insoumis du PDCI ?", *Jeune Afrique*, no. 3003 (29 July – 4 August 2018): 32-33.

⁶⁷⁷ Vincent Duhem and Baudelaire Mieu, "A Quoi Songe Ouattara ? », *Jeune Afrique*, no. 3304 (5 – 11 August 2018) : 22.

⁶⁷⁸ Vincent Duhem and Baudelaire Mieu, "A Quoi Songe Ouattara ? », *Jeune Afrique*, no. 3304 (5 – 11 August 2018) : 22.

⁶⁷⁹ Gbagbo supporter, interview with the author in Abidjan, June 24, 2017, in-person.

explained, part of a group offer for soldiers to retire voluntarily from the armed forces. This individual stated that he was one of 9991 soldiers who would retire and who would receive an additional payment of 15 million F CFA to do so.⁶⁸⁰ Five months later, an article appeared by Reuters explaining that the Ivoirian army was to be reduced by 2,000 soldiers. The cuts would reduce costs and “bring under control a force that last year launched two mutinies.”⁶⁸¹ In the article, government spokesperson Bruno Koné announced that 2,168 soldiers had accepted the voluntary retirement. No mention of a final pay-out appeared in the article. What is unknown is whether the majority of those who left were FN-affiliated or came from former FDS structures.

For those that chose to remain in the army, mutinous remobilisation for the final alleged promises remains a prospect. On the 3rd of May 2018, a follow-up investigation was carried out by *Jeune Afrique* on the status of the Bouaké-based mutineers. The article described how Minister of Defence, Hamed Bakayogo has since attempted to engage with those identified as the leaders of the mutinies with little success. “With each rising, new [heads] emerge”, explained a high-ranking officer to the investigation team. Since the pay-outs of 2017, the mutinous leaders have attempted to remobilise support for another mutiny. Should another mutiny occur, the claims would focus on the acquisition of the alleged villas promised to FN fighters during the rebellion.⁶⁸² The villas, which were originally presented in the 2017 mutinies, was and discreetly dropped within the first 2 days of the 2017 mutiny. The investigation also revealed how frustration was mounting amongst officers and soldiers who served in the FDS before the integration of FN fighters into the FACI. Their frustrations stemmed from “indiscipline becoming the norm”⁶⁸³ since 2011. Finally, a new biometric registration process started in 2017, with the aim of identifying any double names as well as any soldiers who are not of Ivoirian

⁶⁸⁰ Former Integrated FN soldier, Facebook message, August 18, 2017.

⁶⁸¹ Reuters, “Ivory Coast army cut by over two thousand troops”, *Defenceweb.co.za*, May 4, 2018: http://www.defenceweb.co.za/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=51587:ivory-coast-army-cut-by-over-two-thousand-troops&catid=49:National%20Security&Itemid=115

⁶⁸² Vincent Duhem, “Côte d’Ivoire: le casse-tête sécuritaire de Bouaké,” *Jeune Afrique*, May 3, 2018: <http://www.jeuneafrique.com/mag/553240/politique/cote-divoire-le-casse-tete-securitaire-de-bouake/>.

⁶⁸³ Duhem, “Côte d’Ivoire”.

descent, particularly amongst those derived from the FN rebellion. As described by a high-ranking officer, the non-Ivoirians that came from the FN rebellion are “the more virulent and the most manipulable”.⁶⁸⁴

Since the end of the 2017 mutinies, Demobilised FN claims-making also decreased, with no public demonstrations appearing in the media. The mutinies sparked waves of reforms within the armed forces, including a re-shuffling of high-ranking positions, promotions for a handful of the former ComZones, and the ‘voluntary’ retirement of over 2,000 soldiers, as mentioned above. Following the alleged arrests of some demobilised FN, it is likely that the firm response to the mutinies after they received their pay-outs sent a clear signal to others thinking of continuing to destabilise the peace. The decrease in political mobilisation, however, does not necessarily mean that the Demobilised FN have given up their plight. In a recent article appearing in *Jane’s Terrorism and Insurgency Monitor*, links were made between disgruntled ex-combatants and possible remobilisation in radical Islamist violence.⁶⁸⁵ While Ivoirians interviewed showed a strong disapproval of the Islamist strategies of groups like Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), found in northern Mali, the article did not rule out the possibility of violent Islamic ideas seeping into Ivoirian culture, to the point where their tactics are almost normalised and no longer elicit strong reactions. The post-conflict regime under Ouattara has already taken measures to reduce the spread of Islamist extremism within its territory. In 2015, a moratorium on the construction of mosques was issued, along with a ban on the preaching of foreign Imams. Additionally, a counter-terrorism school opened in Abidjan, with French support, in July 2018. Despite these measures, however, violent extremism has taken root over the past ten years and has been particularly noticeable in the central western city of Man, as well as in the Abidjan neighbourhood of Abobo- the same neighbourhood dominated with northern Ivoirians who supported Ouattara and were the target of many attacks by Gbagbo supporters. In contexts where youth unemployment remains

⁶⁸⁴ Duhem, “Côte d’Ivoire”.

⁶⁸⁵ Jessica Moody, “Ex-combatants in Côte d’Ivoire Increasingly Exposed to Remobilisation Opportunities in Mali,” *Jane’s Terrorism & Insurgency Monitor*, July 20, 2018.

high, and where poverty persists, ideas of violent extremism can become appealing, particularly if its ideas are becoming normalised in daily life. As explained in by Jessica Moody, the spread of the ideas can eventually change the dynamic in Côte d'Ivoire.

Ex-combatants would be much more interested in militant Islamist groups if there was more militarized Islamist violence going on around them and the idea more established.⁶⁸⁶

This chapter supports this statement but highlights the necessity for nuance. Given that the Demobilised FN ex-combatants who currently voice discontent are mixed between actual fighters and opportunists, this thesis calls for a more careful application of the term 'ex-combatant'. Rather than apply a blanket designation that "*ex-combatants* would be much more interested [...]", it would rather read "*Ivoirians* would be much more interested [...]". Youth in extreme poverty, who might find such messages appealing, might use the ex-combatant narrative as a form of justification for such actions, whether accurate to their personal situation or not. The choice of an 'ex-combatant' narrative to justify a pull to violent extremism, in scenarios like this, acts as a way of shifting blame away from their personal preferences and agency. This is not to say that veritable FN fighters are not without grievances, especially given the widespread accusations of corruption in the integration process. Rather, it serves as a reminder, that FN experiences, like those of Gbagbo supporters are highly variable, and the risk of ex-combatants remobilising should not be conceptualised apart from the wider context and characteristics of the conflict itself. It is also important to note that across several discussions, with the aforementioned Ivoirian jurist, professor, and most recently, an Ivoirian who works in the area of immigration and security analysis, that Ivoirians are hedging bets on a reluctance of youth to abandon their lifestyle of "*bon vivant*" for one of strict conservatism.⁶⁸⁷

⁶⁸⁶ Moody, "Ex-combatants in Côte d'Ivoire Increasingly Exposed to Remobilisation Opportunities in Mali."

⁶⁸⁷ Ivoirian jurist, Informal discussion with the author in Abidjan-Plateau, September 21, 2016, in-person; Ivoirian professor, informal discussion with the author in Abidjan-Cocody, June 25, 2017, in-person; Ivoirian immigration analyst, informal discussion with the author in Abidjan-Riviera, October 20, 2018, in-person.

This research was carried out in a time of transition from heavy international presence and tutelage to one in which the post-conflict regime consolidated its hold on political and economic power. This specific period was, therefore, ideal to analyse how the label of ex-combatant was used, how it evolved, and how it ultimately became a political tool of clientelism. While this thesis effectively traced the political engagement of ex-combatants under fixed political divisions, there needs to be on-going investigation into how, and whether, these forms of engagement change as political parties mutate and form new alliances. If the RHDP claims victory in 2020 and the label of ex-combatant continues to be leveraged by only one side, then we learn that it ultimately takes on lasting political use. If the opposition claims victory, and Gbagbo supporting ex-combatants begin to leverage the label, then again, it demonstrates the political nature of post-conflict dividends.

Extending the Argument beyond Côte d'Ivoire: Limitations and Opportunities

The Ivoirian case is distinct because of its political and economic history. Following independence, Côte d'Ivoire thrived economically for nearly two decades uninterrupted. It also was ruled by a single ruler, under a one-party state that remained largely uncontested until the final years before a shift to multiparty elections. Under this political stability, Ivoirians were able to condition themselves to a certain set of expectations of governance. While it is also possible that constituents adapt to unstable and inconsistent practices of governance, the long and ultimately prosperous reign of Houphouët-Boigny arguably instilled a sense of possibility to join the 'inside tract' amongst wider populations, rather than within regimes where only a handful of political elites can prosper.

As presented in Chapter 2, patron-client dynamics are prevalent across many Sub-Saharan African cases. Moreover, claims-making behaviours amongst ex-combatants to 'their own' were proven to exist following liberation struggles such as Zimbabwe's. While veteran politics were frequently observed

in post-liberation societies, this thesis posits that they are also applicable to intrastate civil wars as well. The similarities between ZANU-PF aligned veterans in Zimbabwe with FN-affiliated claims-making in Côte d'Ivoire demonstrate that ex-combatant politics is prevalent in a variety of wartime contexts. One avenue of possible research could be to examine if this trend extends to the most recent form of armed conflict on African soil- that of violent extremism and transnational security threats. In Mali, for instance, claims-making by various splinter armed groups seeking stakes in the peace agreement has already begun. Following a separatist rebellion in 2012 by Mali's northern Tuareg groups, the United Nations Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), deployed following the 18 June Ouagadougou Preliminary Agreement. Two years later, in May-June 2015, the Algiers Agreement was signed between the Government of Mali and the two armed group coalitions (*Plateforme* and *Coordination de Mouvements d'Azawad*), including in it provisions for an integrated armed forces and a national DDR programme. To date, the progress implementing the peace agreement has been slow. Where this thesis becomes salient is with the recent occurrence of splinter armed groups emerging, increases in armed banditry, and inter-communal tensions that have seeped into the central and southern parts of the country. On a number of occasions, Malian nationals have lamented the progress, attributing the rise in crime and armed violence to youth taking up banditry in an effort to benefit from any programs that might occur. While it is still premature to determine whether this is the actual case, especially in light of the shifting security dynamics in the country, it raises an important question: are post-conflict benefits such as integration simply seen as goods of redistribution worth engaging in violent behaviour to obtain?

This thesis has added to a nascent academic body of research calling for a more nuanced view of ex-combatant political behaviour in the post-conflict periods. To understand how to most effectively implement policies and programmes that promote peace and stability in the post-conflict period, it is essential to understand the motives and behaviours of ex-combatants, not as singular, but as multifaceted and somewhat contradictory to conclusions

previous research has drawn. A further exploration that questions how common the experiences of ex-combatants in Côte d'Ivoire are with ex-combatants in other countries could provide vital information for the effectiveness of national and international interventions in the post-conflict period. Taking into consideration the political trajectories of different groups of ex-combatants can trigger interventions geared towards pluralistic polities, in which all sides feel represented, and, can consequently, reduce the chances of relapsing into conflict.

In closing, it is crucial to reiterate that the case of post-conflict Côte d'Ivoire is highly complex and is characterised by powerful political elites, enduring secrecy around key events, and long-standing grievances amongst local populations. More importantly, many of its current issues stem from a long history of elite politics and foreign influence- both of which pre-date the 11-year political crisis and ignite passionate debate. As with many countries, but especially true in Côte d'Ivoire, the more one enters into the details, the more convoluted the story becomes, and the more historical links come into play. Many of the facts, names, and numbers crucial to draw any firm conclusions on the events of the 11-year political crisis remain undisclosed, to both locals and foreigners alike. This enduring secrecy makes the task of drawing firm and generalisable conclusions an elusive task. While the arguments presented in this thesis were informed by local perceptions and narratives of events, it is only fitting to close the thesis in the same way. The complexity of the country and its politics is best summarised by Ivoirians themselves, in an expression that was frequently repeated and holds just as much truth today as it did in leading into the 11-year political crisis.

*Si on t'a expliqué la politique de la Côte d'Ivoire et tu as compris, c'est qu'on t'a mal expliqué.*⁶⁸⁸

If somebody explained to you the politics of Côte d'Ivoire and you understood it, it means that they did not explain it correctly.

⁶⁸⁸ Gbagbo-supporter, Abidjan-II Plateaux, 8 August 2018, in-person. Iterations of this statement were made frequently over the course 12 months of fieldwork. Prior to the fieldwork, international practitioners voiced similar statements, many of which lived both in rebel-held territories and in southern parts of the country during the 11-year political crisis.

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Appendix A: Sample of Questions Used

Introductions

To begin, can you tell me a little bit about yourself?

Where are you from? Where is your family from?

Wartime Experience

Based on what they answered above, I tried to situate them in the larger Ivoirian conflict context.

- 1) Where you in (city/region) when (conflict event) happened? I heard that (x,y,z) happened, but am not sure if this is true, do you know anything about this?
- 2) What were you doing at this time?
- 3) What impact did this have on your daily life/ family life?

Post-Conflict Period

- 1) So after 'la chute', what did you think? Did you feel like it was a good time to voice your concerns?
- 2) Have things gotten easier for you since 2011 (financially, stability, security, etc...)?
- 3) What way do you think is best to tell the government your concerns?



Claims-Making

- 1) Did you hear about (x,y,z claims-making by ex-combatants)?
- 2) Who do you think might be participating?
- 3) Would you consider doing it?
- 4) If you did, why did you consider it?
- 5) I've noticed that only some ex-combatants are making claims, do you know why this might be?

General

- 1) What do you think is the most important thing for me to know?

Appendix B- Feuille de Route “Le Collectif”

 Sages du collectif des ex- Combattants et représentant des ADS 05 71 07 82 / 03 24 08 75	 Bouaké le 08/07/2016
<u>FEUILLE DE ROUTE DES EX-COMBATTANT ET REPRESENTANT DES ADS</u>	
<p>Après le bureau centrale à Bouaké, dans chaque quartier nous avons deux délégué qui ont nos feuille de route.</p> <p>Nous devons connaître le nombre de combattant dans chaque ville, quartier et village. Chaque combattant doit connaître notre statut et règlement intérieur car il n'est question de marché ou de meeting. Toute question de violence est interdite.</p> <p>Nous devons être les premiers à insérer la paix en côte d'ivoire.</p> <p>Ce désarmement ne concerne que les combattants des villes, des quartiers et des villages.</p> <p>Le collectifs des ex-combattants et le représentant des ADS doit aider les autorités en côte d'ivoire à instaurer la paix et la sécurité.</p> <p>Ce sont les combattant qui se connaissent entre eux, par confiance ces combattants se sont identifié par une photo de carte d'identité avec leur badge 39, le numéro de téléphone et 200f. Chaque délégué doit déposer deux photo d'identité.</p> <p>Les bailleresses de fon comme L' ONU et UNION EUROPEEN peuvent nous aider dans ce processus de désarmement.</p> <p>Nous avons un badge de travail que chaque délégué doit avoir.</p> <p>Celui qui sort dans notre cadre sera sanctionné sévèrement.</p>	
<u>SIGNATAIRE</u>	
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;">COLLECTIF DES COMBATTANT ET LE REPRESENTANT A.D.S. 05 71 07 82 / 03 24 08 75</div>	